


AD #

FOCUS

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

The Toad Knew
Edinburgh International Festival
Directed by James Thierrée
Lighting design by Alex Hardellet and James Thierrée
Photograph by Richard Haughton

October/November 2016

- 
- In the crosslight this issue:*
- Lumière scheme update
 - Edinburgh lighting round-up
 - Knight of Illumination winners
 - The language of facelight
- ...and much, much more...
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From the chairman...



Peter Mumford
ALD chairman

It interests me how technology and its marketing of new products always seems to win the day. We all seem to be putting our “Save Tungsten” badges away in a back drawer.

This may be a bit of an exaggeration but it's certainly true that the LED developments of the last few years are really solving the problems that we were having with the early models, in terms of both colour and dimming. From a philosophical point of view it's interesting that it's that first reaction though from the exponents of the “art” that can really shape future technology. If people hadn't disliked the cold and unfriendly quality of cold LED light despite its power then I doubt that manufacturers would have developed the warmer qualities that we are now able to use. The great tungsten protest has made its mark without being a Luddite movement. Every new phase of technological development has to be protected and formulated by a knowledge and respect for past history. The emergence of photography threatened painting, television threatened the theatre, the internet threatens privacy. Even so,

all these things survive, albeit in redefined forms. So, we must embrace the new but be informed by the best of the past. Just as digital imagery has largely replaced film I hope that film will still find a place and be available for use, and I'm guessing that despite the fact that the LED is getting better and better there will still be a place for the odd light bulb or two.

Autumn is here – winter approaches and I hate the darker evenings. Let's all join the “Lighter Later” campaign – it's so much nicer (in my opinion) in the rest of Europe when the evenings don't close in quite so quickly.

Things usually get a bit hectic around this time of year so I hope all our members are busy and casting beautiful light all over the country. 🍁

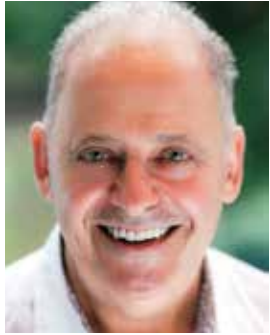
Peter

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Among the winners were five ALD members across three categories.

Thighs like a shire horse

Mark Jonathan cycles to work in Denmark



After a quick holiday in the Swiss mountains, where I remind myself what natural light does from dawn through to sunset, not to mention how the stars and planets shimmer, away from the light pollution of metropolis, I hit the new opera season. August takes me back to the Danish National Opera in Aarhus for *I Puritani* (a co-pro with Welsh National Opera). It's great to be back and the LX team has already rigged and is ready for the focus. I get back on my Danish bike and think how the whole Danish population must be fitter than average as they ride everywhere. The production goes smoothly apart from our leading lady being taken sick on the day of the final dress rehearsal.

The singer covering the role was flown in, while the assistant director did an excellent job "walking" the role while the conductor sang – well, sort of "wailed" – from the pit. It was not the dress rehearsal we wanted but that's opera. The following day was filled rehearsing the cover, but our soprano recovered by the next day in time for the first night and all was well.

Back in the UK I travel down to Glyndebourne for the *bauprobe* of *Madama Butterfly*. It's my first time working in the new opera house, which opened in 1994. I worked there from 1978 until 1992 when the old house was knocked down. An interesting fact is that during the twentieth century, while other countries built new state opera houses, there were only two built in the UK, and those

were the two houses at Glyndebourne, which were both built without any state funding. I'm very excited to be back. It will be Glyndebourne's first *Butterfly* in its 82-year history, which makes everyone else excited too. Curiously, it's my third Japanese-themed opera of the year. It makes so much sense for the creative team to be able to walk on the set, built on stage before rehearsals begin; it allows me to be able to point some lights and solve any problems ahead of the production period, along with the designer being able to give



La Cenerentola (Askepot)
Opera Holland Park/Danish National Opera
Directed by Oliver Platt
Design by Neil Irish
Lighting design by Mark Jonathan
Photograph by Kaare Viemose



see how brilliant everyone is and what a will for perfection there is. I stay for the first day of rehearsal where the set has been moved in its entirety to the rehearsal room.

Then it's back to Denmark for the transfer of *La Cenerentola* (also known as *Askepot*) from Opera Holland Park. I take Rory Beaton with me as I can only stay for a few days and then I'll commute as possible. I hop back onto my bike and I have

design notes before things get pressurised and for the director to look closely at the sightlines. Dave Manion dexterously focuses the overhead moving light rig. Things have

changed since I left and the overhead rig is completely moving now. The technical team are all in attendance and we have a great couple of days. It's fantastic to be back and

one waiting for Rory too. After a day in Denmark Rory discretely admits to having a sore backside! I'm inured to the saddle but he's got to get used to cycling. He certainly

Thighs like a shire horse

Mark Jonathan

gives me a run for my money up the hills. I joke that he will have thighs like a shire horse after a month in Denmark, while my body is more akin to a tubby Shetland pony. The rig is up and we focus in one evening. Over the next two days, around stage rehearsals, Rory and I get all the cues in the desk. As I was ahead of the schedule I thought it would be nice to look at a stage rehearsal with the lights on. However, I was told that as it hadn't been scheduled the chorus would decline to sing. I offer to keep the dim working lights on in case it was a health and safety issue. My offer is declined. Mental note to self to always check the schedule. Instead, Rory and I mount our bikes and go off for a nice ride to look at the sea, enjoy the sunshine and let me calm down.

I get back to the UK in time for the KOI awards, now in its new home at the Eventim in Hammersmith. It's bigger and more splendid than ever. Many thanks to the sponsors for their generosity and the KOI organisers for the hard work. Thanks and appreciation also to the theatre, opera and dance critics, led by David Benedict, for their fine judgment

of the theatre awards. The next day it's back to Glyndebourne for rehearsals. By the end of the week we are focusing and the following week we start with piano rehearsals on stage. It's disconcerting not to have costumes as the picture looks unfinished and I know that the lighting always looks better with costumes. We need to work fast over rehearsals and I am blessed to have Amy Clarke programming for me, whose fingers fly across the touch screens and keypads. The team all have a glint in their eyes and everyone is good natured, skilled and very committed to achieving the best art possible. This a real treat for me. Curiously, on my first season at Glyndebourne I encountered Puccini for the first time. It was a beautiful production of *La Bohème*. Hearing Puccini's music for the tragic story of Madam Butterfly, whose loyalty to her "American-dream" husband ends in suicide, many memories flood back. I fear that my reminiscences may be boring the pants off the team but they humour me as I babble on.

On my days off I will nip back to Denmark and then up to Glasgow for *Nozze di Figaro*, which the Scottish Opera lighting manager Robert Dickson is looking after. As I start my "commute" on the plane the newspapers start to write about how much visas will cost to go to EEC countries. I start to growl from behind my newspaper. I knew it. We will be taken to the cleaners. The Brexiteers will probably only need one expensive visa a year for their summer holiday but I'll need a bloomin' season ticket. 🌸

Tips 'n' tricks

Mark Jonathan and Rory Beaton

We were amused to see the Danish solution to not hitting the blackout button accidentally. Take one plastic bottle top...



Holidays and royalties

Johanna Town returns from holiday



I have been very fortunate this year to have had the opportunity to take two very exciting holidays: one to the Sunshine Coast of Australia which included three weeks of surfing, 4x4 driving on long deserted beaches and some great food. The other holiday was to the Pearl Islands off the coast of Panama with ten days of rainforests and sailing with humpback whales in the Pacific Ocean.

Australia blessed me with low winter sun and beautiful sunset skies, whilst Panama's humid heat and basking sunshine allowed me to admire light reflected through the rainforests and also provided some stunning cloud formations to watch and record whilst out on the ocean.

Holidays for us freelancers can be hard to take and maintain: no holiday pay, no

set weeks – and what if that dream job lands just as you have paid for your flights? My past eight years as a freelancer have meant fitting holidays around my and my partner's (also a freelancer!) diaries and it has never been totally satisfactory. What I realised in Australia was for the first time I had no shows to think about (due to my next trip being more or less back to back), there were no scripts to read, no sneaking back to base to finish that plan; I didn't even have to look at my emails – a complete and utter joy and a true holiday.

This week, therefore, was a bit of a bump back into reality, with all the autumn shows' deadlines starting to approach, rushing around London to meetings and rehearsals as well as PLASA being in town.

I have to say, although I only managed a whistlestop tour around the exhibition on Tuesday, it is always lovely to meet up with exhibitors for a chat and to catch up with old friends. I did enjoy the new venue; it was light and cool, not too big, and easy to get to. I hope it was a success for the exhibitors and that you all had a good show.

I also missed out on this year's KOI awards on the Sunday, so a big congratulations to all the winners and nominations. It was a

brilliant year for theatre, dance and opera designs and must have been very hard to judge. I would also like to thank all the judges for their time in selecting our winners and a special thanks to Matt Trueman for his fantastic article in WhatsOnStage the day after this year's awards. It is brilliant to get the message of lighting out there to a wider audience. A reprint of Matt's article can be found on page 30.

Professional issues

On a more serious note, over the summer break the Exec was asked about royalties on a show that had started touring again. The original contract stated "Royalties negotiated in good faith"; however, no negotiations were forthcoming and the response was that there was no money available. This has happened to me several times where companies seem to be able to afford to reproduce a show, yet feel that no money needs to be put aside to pay for our work to be reproduced.

It is a hard clause for any of us as "good faith" is always negotiable and usually not in our favour but I have a few tips that might help in the future:

Always make sure the copyright to use your work has an end date in the contract. We are seeing more and more companies trying to own the right to use your work. This means, regardless of a royalties payment,

they are not allowed to re use your work without negotiated a new fee or royalty.

Always have a “good faith” clause in your contract so you have a position to negotiate later.

If I am working for a company that regularly tours, but is more small scale than large scale, I negotiate at the time of the first contract a small royalty fee, say £50–£100, dependent on the size of the show/producers. They will argue they have no intention of touring the show, to which one responds that it doesn't matter if it's in the contract as it will never need to be paid. By doing this they have to budget for your work if they later change their mind.

You can also add a box office percentage to this figure; for example, if a show's profits may clear between 40% and 60% there would be a percentage pool, usually about 0.5% for lighting designers, and this can increase when 100% recoupment is made. This would be a boost to your original, low minimum. This can, however, be complicated to negotiate in a first contract, but is worth a go.

If you have an “end date” and/or a “good faith” clause in your contract and the company is using your work without your permission then you must report the issue to Equity and the ALD. We can only inform other members when asked, but Equity can a) act on your behalf to obtain payments

and b) blacklist a producer who is breaking a contract.

Just to reiterate, make sure your initial contract does not sell your rights away. Read your contract very carefully and don't take “this is what we always do” for an answer.

If a company, however, is wishing to renegotiate a royalty for a tour or reuse of your work here is an example of what can be expected. These are not great figures and I would always try to increase the pool base as much as possible. I would also want to negotiate a minimum fee, whatever happens with a pool.

An example of common contract wording:

UK Tour – 0.5% of NWBOR (net weekly box office receipts), rising to 0.75% of NWBOR at 110% recoupment of the Production's production costs.

Royalties may be calculated on a royalty pool based on operating profits, with Designer receiving 0.5 points in a pool not to exceed ten (10) points; a minimum weekly guarantee of £150 per point per week (thus



Holidays and royalties

Johann Town

£75 for Designer); and 30% of the weekly operating profits to be allocated to the pool. At 110% recoupment of Production's production costs, the minimum weekly guarantee shall increase to £175 per point per week (thus £87.50 for Designer), and 40% of the weekly operating profits shall be allocated to the pool.

I hope this helps.

Lastly, I used the ALD Facebook page over the summer, my one digression whilst I was away. My question was: should I use truss booms or lighting stands on a small-scale tour? First, thanks to everyone who made comments and posted pictures; it was a really useful exercise and helped

the company I was working for have more than just my opinion on the issue. The ALD Facebook page is a really useful tool for designers and lighting technicians to share information, and I hope it continues to be filled with tips and tricks that you all pick up in the course of your work. 🍷





*Sister Act
Joburg Theatre
Lighting, set and projection design by Declan Randall
Photograph by Joe Lott (associate lighting designer)*

You can hear Declan talk about his design process at Showlight 2017 in Florence. Details on page 22.

Edinburgh Festival 2016

Critic **Mark Fisher** with his annual round-up

James Thierrée is a theatremaker with a singular vision. So singular, in fact, that he takes credit for almost every aspect of his work. In his Edinburgh International Festival production, *The Toad Knew*, he was not only performing on the stage of the King's Theatre, he also took credit for direction, design, original music and – with Alex Hardellet – the lighting.

"I want to make sure the lights aren't going to be just beautiful," he told me when we met in Montpellier in advance of the festival. "It needs to be alive. It needs to transform. It needs to be the same kind of feeling of metamorphosis with the light as there is with the actors, as there is with the music. It's all one thing and it's got to go all the same way."

Thierrée, who is the great grandson of Eugene O'Neill and grandson of Charlie Chaplin, created a wonderland where traditional circus routines – trapeze, clowning, magic – took on an air of mystery. The steam-punk setting, with a forest of cables manipulating a set of floating platforms above the performers' heads, recalled the cinematic dreamscapes of Terry Gilliam, Tim Burton and David Lynch. It was frequently funny, but just as often unsettling.

Thierrée told me he took on the lighting in order "to be faithful to that first idea, to that fragile intimate thought" that inspired him to create the show in the first place. The lighting looked the way it did because of the contrasting approaches

taken by him and Hardellet. "He's a technology geek and I love old lights, candles and old spots," he said. "There was a bit of friction because he wanted to use a lot of new technology. He brought it into the show and I kept it old fashioned and the collaboration was great."

The shapes that rose and fell above the performers' heads were like giant lampshades throbbing with a translucent glow. The lights in each were battery powered and controlled by Wi-Fi, which meant all the flexibility of LED and none



Blow Off
Traverse Theatre
Lighting design by Simon Wilkinson
Photograph by Niall Walker

of the inconvenience of cables. It created an otherworldly effect, as did the strip lights rising at the back of the stage, the pool of water turning from red to green to purple, the pulse of light flickering up a transparent cable, the side lighting making pockets from the folds in a curtain, and the occasional crackling outburst like a welder's sparks.

It would be pointless trying to say where set design finished and lighting design began.

Earlier in the three-week festival, I took part in a panel discussion organised by

the Envelope Room, an organisation run by Lisa Sangster and Claire Halleran to support set, costume, video, lighting and puppetry designers in Scotland. The subject was “Critics versus Creatives” and among the panellists was ALD member Simon Wilkinson, who took the chance to highlight the role played by *Focus* in hiring critics to write.

“One of the side effects is it encourages people to think about lighting in general,” he said. “I think things are progressing.”

He argued that good theatre criticism should take account of all the contributory elements: “I get very frustrated by reviews that could have been written by a critic with a play script. For me, the words are one part of the experience of going to the theatre, so a review that purely reviews the text seems to miss out on a lot of the experiential aspect of theatre. My ideal

sits somewhere in the middle: that it can place the piece in its context and do so by talking about text, performance, design, direction ... all of those things together.”

Wilkinson was the lighting designer on Julia Taudevin’s *Blow Off* at the Traverse, a hybrid rock gig and spoken-word performance that gave him the challenge of straddling the two forms. The show’s default position was a standard guitar-drums-and-keyboard line-up with Taudevin on lead vocals, but over the performance, she repeatedly pushed into something more theatrical.

Through poetry and song, Taudevin told a fierce feminist narrative about a woman turning to terrorism. The storytelling was as important to her as the riot grrrr spikiness of the music. Each had to work as convincingly as the other.

For Wilkinson, it meant supplementing

the broad brushstrokes of gig lighting with something nuanced enough to frame the drama. He lit a street-like area on the bare stage in front of the band, suggested the high-tech office where the woman worked,

and arranged standard lamps (minus the shades) in between the musicians as if to create a meeting point between the domestic and the public.

At the Envelope Room discussion, Wilkinson commented on the amount of simple but effective design work he had seen at Summerhall, the venue that swept the board in nearly all of the Fringe awards this year. He gave the specific example of Kieran Hurley’s *Heads Up*, which he described as “one man sitting at a desk with eight birdies and a back light”.

It was a good call. The storytelling show consisted of little more than Hurley speaking into a microphone at a small square table. Accompanying himself by moving the faders on two samplers (score by Michael John McCarthy), he told a tale of a world spiralling towards economic apocalypse.

It couldn’t have been more basic, but by directing the small lights – and a candle – at Hurley’s face at close range, lighting designer Malcolm Rogan brought a special intensity to the show. The brightness of the performer’s face was in extreme contrast to the darkness around him, the lights inverting his features while casting a double shadow on the back curtain. It turned a story of impending catastrophe into a ghoulish gothic horror.

Also at Summerhall, also dealing with the apocalypse and also making a powerful statement with simple lighting was Ontroerend Goed’s *World Without Us*.



Heads Up
Summerhall
Lighting design by Malcolm Rogan
Photograph by Niall Walker

Edinburgh Festival 2016

Mark Fisher

Performed with a dispassionate precision by Valentijn Dhaenens, the monologue took us step by logical step from the room where we sat to a post-human landscape in which the forces of nature would reassert themselves.

Lighting designer Babette Poncelet could not have made the point more forcibly: for a long section of the early

part of the show, she turned the lights off altogether, plunging the audience into a desperate darkness until slowly a ghostly light returned. That became sunlight which in turn was obscured by the growth of a forest, only to reassert itself in a subsequent epoch. In our absence, she seemed to say, the future of the planet will be a continual dance of light.

Two more quick examples of simple but effective lighting. First, *Milk* by Ross Dunsmore at the Traverse. When the LED warning lights flickered on a baby alarm, lighting designer Philip Gladwell mimicked their pattern in vertical strip lights on the back wall of Fred Meller's set – it was like the volume and the urgency had been turned up.

Meanwhile in John Tiffany's production of *The Glass Menagerie*, the more the characters moved into a reflective past tense, the more Natasha Katz's lighting closed in on them and the more starkly they were reflected in the inky pool of water on Bob Crowley's floating set.

Finally, playing to an audience of people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, *The Forest* by Frozen Light was a woodland fairytale told by means of the five senses. We smelt the charred wood of a campfire, felt the misty spray of a rain shower, tasted the dried fruit from a picnic and heard songs based on the audience's names.





Those in wheelchairs were positioned on the stage in such a way that Dave Sherman's lighting could rise on them individually, subtly integrating them into the story. When the actors brought out balloons, each contained an illuminated bulb, emitting a magical glow. Just as magical were the circles of canvas that the actors used to make bespoke silhouettes of themselves and their delighted audience. It was, once again, no less effective for its simplicity. 🌸

Above:
The Forest
Frozen Light
Lighting design by Dave Sherman
Photograph by JMA Photography

Right:
The Glass Menagerie
Directed by John Tiffany
Design by Bob Crowley
Lighting design by Natasha Katz
Photograph by Johan Persson



Sixpence and Strife

New Lumière *Rachel Cleary* on her first three months



Rachel is delighted to have been picked for the Lumière scheme, giving her a unique opportunity to work alongside and learn from top lighting designers. She loves travelling and makes the most of any spare time on the road by exploring whichever city she happens to be in!

I couldn't believe it on the Wednesday afternoon when I got the phone call asking me if I would like to be the next Lumière! I was so happy and grateful to have been picked. I couldn't wait to get started and it wasn't long before I was boarding a train down to Chichester.

I started at an interesting time at the theatre. It was the week of previews

for *Half a Sixpence*, and although it was somewhat winding down there was still the feeling of anticipation before press night. Starting at this time gave me the opportunity to get to know the team, who were all very welcoming and helpful. I also met Paule Constable, walking for her as she put the finishing touches before opening night. I was very excited

to be invited to the opening night and party. It was great to see the show and to see how the space worked. Having worked wholly in proscenium theatre it was interesting to see how a thrust space with no fly tower worked – how different looks could be achieved and how the set and scenery changes were done purely using automation in place of flying. It was a great atmosphere at the after party; you could feel the relief and the sense of achievement from the whole team.

As soon as *Half a Sixpence* was up and running it was time for me to get stuck in to my first show, *Strife*, written by John Galsworthy and directed by Bertie Carvel. I would be working with Rick Fisher. Rick traditionally hand-draws his plans, and it would be my job to transpose his plan into Vectorworks. Before I could do this I needed to have a crash course in the software from Tom White. Having been a venue technician for most of my career, when I did have the opportunity to light a show I had tended to use free software such as Claude Heintz Design's LX Free or demos of other programs. So although I had some experience with design software, Vectorworks was totally new to me. Tom proved to be a fantastic teacher, giving me a great formula to work from and showing me all aspects of the software including the 3D elements. Although I was slightly apprehensive when he left, I soon felt very comfortable as I worked



The Chichester Shakespeares lighting team (left to right): Graham Taylor, Sam Garner Gibbons, Jenny Roxburgh, Oliver Fenwick, Rachel Cleary, Eden Thornton, Theo Chadha and Charlie Lee

Strife
Chichester Festival Theatre
Directed by Bertie Carvel
Design by Robert Jones
Lighting design by Rick Fisher
Photograph by Johan Persson



my way around the software. He gave me a list of things to work through myself and his comprehensive notes were easy to refer to. I also knew he was only an email away if I got stuck and would get back to me as soon as he was able. There were a few stumbling blocks (including half my symbols turning into rectangles when I interchanged a symbol) but I soon overcame them. Rick was also great to work with and was very patient with me as

I worked out how he preferred to have the plan arranged. *Strife* was a very interesting production to work on. Not only was it the first production I would work on in the thrust but also the first one with a mirrored floor! As Rick said, although it brought us many challenges, it also gave us gifts in some of the reflections and the looks that it helped create. I kept notes of any issues that we worked on each day and made sure the plan was up to date, and

Rick would ask my opinion and for me to write my own notes during previews which I was very grateful for.

Over the next few weeks I will be working on two different productions by the RSC: *Much Ado about Nothing* and *Love's Labour's Lost*. I have been attending the production meetings and have already met the lighting designer, Oliver Fenwick, who I am very much looking forward to working with. 🍀

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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The 9x%

Addressing diversity and everyday “-isms” in our industry

The seven areas of equal opportunity and diversity focused on by the British Council are age; disability; race/ethnicity; gender (which includes transgender); religion/belief and culture; sexual orientation; and work-life balance.

In our technology-led industry, how can we use that technology to support those with hidden disabilities? F has some suggestions that come from personal experience:

“**D**uring my training in London I was lighting programmer for a large opera. I was working with a lighting designer who – to his credit – was very patient and understanding. As we began the first dress rehearsal there had been some major changes to the action outside of plotting and the lighting needed an overhaul.

As soon as I had extinguished the working lights my ear was ringing with channel numbers and intensities... then silence... followed by, “What’s happened? I never asked for any of these channels to be changed... I asked for...” and he repeated the numbers again. Looking at the command line I read back all

the numbers the LD just repeated with intensities in my head and they were correct. I froze for a moment. I didn’t know what to do. What was the problem?

I looked over at the LD and tentatively said, “I am not sure what is wrong. The numbers are right.” He replied, “No, they are all wrong.” Confused, I looked back at the monitor to see I had reversed every digit pair. I felt incredibly stupid. I couldn’t believe I had not noticed this. Sadly, the rehearsal never got any better as I continued to reverse numbers unknowingly.

In my amateur life I had never had this problem, but in this situation I could hear a number and see that number and yet my hands typed it in backwards. After the dress I remembered that I had noticed this problem when using a phone years ago: when someone told me a telephone number I would often type it in wrongly so I would ask them to text or email it. Face to face I never had this issue and I realised that as long as I could read the person’s lips my brain would not reverse the numbers.

After the rehearsal I spoke to my lecturer about it and his response was, “Well, don’t become a board op.” While this seems

sound advice, especially for my long-suffering LD, if I knew the problem (i.e. not being able to read the LD’s lips), to what extent would it be reasonable to expect the industry to find a workable solution?

At first this may sound a little implausible but the technology is pretty much there already. For example, I was programming an Eos desk and the designer had the remote module sitting next to him. What if you could plug a cheap webcam into the USB of the remote module which allowed the Eos operator to run that feed onto one of the external desk/built-in monitors? I agree this function is rather specific so it may not be cost effective for ETC to develop but I wonder what other features could help technicians at a small cost rather than disadvantage them.” 🚫

Please share your experiences with us by emailing katharine.williams@ald.org.uk. All submissions will be kept anonymous.



Office Oracle

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

Changes in personnel

At the last Executive Committee meeting there were a few departures and a number of arrivals for those in and around the Executive, as we re-structure the organisation after incorporation earlier this year.

After almost 20 years on the Executive in various roles ranging from Student rep to Deputy Chairman, Jason Larcombe has stepped down, as has Scott Palmer, who has been an Education rep since 2001. Another two former Student reps have also stepped down: Will Evans, who joined the Exec in 2003, has more recently been part of the meetings team, and Jack Knowles, who has completed seven years as part of the group of members guiding and developing the ALD. The Exec would like to thank them all for their work, dedication and commitment for a combined service of 54 years, which is almost as long as the ALD has existed in one form or another!

Joining the Exec in as-yet-undefined roles are lighting designer Prema Mehta and recent ABTT Technician of the Year Steve Huttly. We look forward to welcoming new faces and fresh thoughts in our conversations. You can now see a complete list of the current Exec either here in Focus on page 24 or on the website at www.ald.org.uk/about/executive-committee.

We also welcome Ben Payne (another former Student rep!) and Alex Allen as part of the new ALD Meetings team who organise our members' meetings and events. So if you have any suggestions for the sort of events you would like to see, have an idea of your own or even wish to help out as part of the meetings team to help spread the workload across more people, you can contact them on meetings@ald.org.uk.

Are you interested in becoming more involved?

With the incorporation process of the ALD now complete, at the Board and Executive meeting in May we formalised the rotation of directors with some initially serving one year and some two years to set up the full rotation procedure.

We are now looking for members who are either interested in becoming future directors, or those who wish to help out either on the Executive or in one of our working groups. We have had a few members step forward after the last issue, but we are always looking for more help, especially with setting up meetings and events around the country.

It may be that you have a specific role in mind or wish to set up and run a sub-committee for a project or issue that you feel is important, but as we continue to develop the Association, we will be looking for members to be actively engaged in the process, contributing to discussions, attending some meetings and volunteering for specific tasks that are required.

If this interests you, then please contact Association Development officer John Leventhall, or any of the current Executive, for further details or to put your name forward: john.leventhall@ald.org.uk.

Sponsored Student Scheme

The ALD Executive has decided to change the entry requirements for the Sponsored Student Scheme for new applicants wishing to have membership through 2017.

Full details can be found at www.ald.org.uk/students/ald-sponsored-students-scheme. On a basic level, it means that the free membership will now only be open to new Student members who have never held ALD membership before, and it will be limited to one full subscription year.

However, for those who joined under the old system, we are willing to continue your access to FREE membership under the following terms:

Any CURRENT Sponsored Student members who continue to be students during the 2016/17 academic year will need to download and complete a form – including the signature of your tutor – returning it to the ALD office, to allow them to retain their FREE membership under the terms and conditions they signed up for in 2015. A link to this form has been sent out via email bulletin. If you have not received this, please visit www.ald.org.uk/resources/sponsored-student-scheme-renewal-form.

If this student status is not renewed prior to Christmas 2016, your ALD membership will automatically end on 31 March 2017 and you will be subject to the general membership entry requirements should you wish to re-join at a later date.

If you are a Student member who has joined during the current subscription year, you will be eligible to join the sponsored scheme. Please contact the ALD office for further details.

Do we have your correct contact details?!

While you are logged into the website, it would be a good time to confirm that we have all the correct contact details for you. During this period of the year we often receive a number of copies of *Focus* returned to us as “unknown at this address”.

Please ensure that you update your information on the website directly via the “Contact Details & 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 new 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 are reading this and you have never registered an email address with us but wish to access the members’ side of the website and/or receive our email bulletins, please contact us as soon as possible so we can update your details.

The same page also allows you to select which contact details you wish to appear in the Members’ Yearbook, and we will be starting to collate this information in October to produce the 2017 edition. New this time around is the possibility of adding a Twitter handle or Skype screen name to the list. We will no longer be including fax contacts.

PLEASE ensure that you update your details **NO LATER** than 31 October.

Did you graduate from your course this summer?

When you join the ALD as a student member, we ask you to inform us of your proposed graduation date so we know when you are due to finish your course.

If that was listed as the summer of 2016, we have now changed your membership category to the Affiliate membership for early career professionals, and with that you will be able to start accessing the same benefits as the Professional members, with the exception of voting on Association issues.

Your current membership subscription (whether paid or via the Sponsored Student Scheme) will continue to run until the end of March 2017. Prior to this, you will need to inform us as to whether you wish to remain an Affiliate member, move to being an Associate member or whether to stop your membership completely.

The sooner you do this the sooner we can ensure you are sent a reminder for the correct level of subscription for 2017/18 or, if you have chosen to stop your membership, do not send you a reminder.

Under the Constitution of the ALD, memberships continue to run until such time that you inform us that you wish to leave. No contact will be assumed to mean that you are happy to continue as an Affiliate member and to pay the relevant subscription rate as of April 2017.

Office Oracle

Ian Saunders

Members' monthly social evenings

The monthly socials take place on the last Friday of most months and are open all categories of ALD Members. They take place at the Coach and Horses pub on Wellington Street in central London, just 100 yards down from the front of the Royal Opera House and opposite the London Transport Museum.

They provide a great opportunity to discuss ideas, catch up with colleagues and make new friends. You can meet and discuss ALD issues with some of the team who run the ALD and chat with fellow lighting designers and ALD members, in an informal setting.

We also are very appreciative of the Corporate members who support these evenings, giving them the opportunity to meet and talk with members away from the working environment.

The October evening is being sponsored by Zero88 and takes place on **Friday 28 October**. November's date is **Friday 25 November** and the evening is sponsored by SLX.

We normally gather from around 7.00pm, but if you are in town you are welcome to drop in any time for the few hours after that. Sometimes the sponsor

chooses to start earlier, so please watch the email bulletins and other various social media channels for the latest information.

If any of our other Corporate or Commercial members wish to discuss any of the available dates in 2017 please contact your Executive Committee representative, Declan Randall: companies@ald.org.uk.

Showlight 2017 Florence, Italy 20-23 May 2017

Preparations for Showlight 2017 are heating up as the first speakers for this unique quadrennial event are announced. The programme promises to be as fascinating as ever with the following ALD members the first to be announced:

Declan Randall

Declan will tell of his experience of acting as set and projection designer, in addition to lighting designer, for an original production of *Sister Act* in Johannesburg.

Amy Mae Smith

Amy made her West End debut as the lighting designer for the critically acclaimed *Sweeney Todd* on Shaftesbury Avenue, winning the 2016 Knight of Illumination Award in the Musicals category.

Philip Norfolk

Philip will explain how the sun works, how heavy a dustbin of sun is and why the sky is blue, whilst also covering nuclear fusion and other photon facts ... and will

somehow manage to incorporate a picture of Albert Einstein!

Simon Corder

Simon has been summoned to Singapore to relight his original design in the world's first Night Zoo. Expect tales of tigers and elephants in a tropical forest – and how they react to LEDs!

Luc Peumans

Belgian lighting designer Luc specialises in lighting large-scale productions and will present a paper entitled *Painting with Light*.

Rob Halliday

The Papers Committee is still wading through the variety of subjects Rob has been suggesting ... but he's sure to be entertaining as always!

The first of Showlight 2017's panel presentations has also been announced, with the subject of programming as its focus: what is the relationship between the lighting designer and the programmer; what should it be, and how will it develop? An experienced panel from all the lighting genres will disagree!

For more information about Showlight 2017 and to book your place visit www.showlight.org.

"Creative Alliance" networking evening Friday 13 January 2017

For the last couple of years, we have held regular meetings with our sister organisations Stage Directors UK, Society of British Theatre Designers

and Association of Sound Designers to discuss issues that are common to all the associations and their professional members. We will be holding a joint networking evening for the professional practitioners for the four associations to meet and either catch up with old colleagues, or to develop new contacts for future projects. Full details will be released nearer the time, but at the moment if you are interested in attending, please pencil Friday 13 (!) January into your diaries.

Roger Simonsz BSC

Congratulations to ALD member Roger Simonsz, who has been elected a full member of the British Society of Cinematographers. Roger said, "This entitles me to use the letters BSC behind my name. I'm not sure how many ALD members are also in the BSC, but needless to say I'm very proud to have this honour bestowed on me!" Congrats, Roger! 🍷



Roger Simonsz with Nick James, editor of Sight and Sound magazine

National Theatre events

Two events celebrating 40 years of the National Theatre

NT: 40 Years as a Space for Plays

Tuesday 25 October, 6.00pm

Running Time: 45 mins

Paule Constable (lighting designer and NT Associate), Richard Pilbrow (Laurence Olivier's lighting director and theatre consultant), and Steve Tompkins (co-founder of Haworth Tompkins Ltd, architects on the NT Future project) explore the process of the architectural design of the three NT theatre spaces, and celebrate the creativity of the theatre designer over the last 40 years with the practical experiences of working onstage. The event will be chaired by Gavin Henderson, principal of The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.

Pre-signed copies of Richard Pilbrow's book, *A Theatre Project*, will be on sale in the NT Bookshop.

Tickets are £5 (£4 concessions) from www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/shows/nt-40-years-space-plays.

The National Theatre: A Place For Plays

Sunday 30 October

9.30am to 8.00pm

The symposium is directed by Richard Pilbrow and Paule Constable and speakers include Rufus Norris, Steve Tompkins, Ian MacNeil, Peter Ruthven-Hall, Tim Foster, Gavin Green, William Dudley, Daniel Rosenthal, Nick Starr, Lyndsay Turner, Paddy Dillon, David Staples and Chloe Lamford.

Speakers will discuss how theatre makers at the National Theatre have worked in its spaces and contributed to its success as a place for plays, and consider the technological opportunities of the future. The symposium also includes a live demo of the drum revolve, a visit to the Dorfman and an evening celebration reception.

Tickets are £50 or £37.50 with promo code TT101 from www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/shows/abt-symposium-2016. For further information, visit www.abtt.org.uk/event/symposium-the-national-theatre-a-place-for-plays.

The ABTT is grateful for the support of the sponsors of the 30 October event: Aedas Arts Team, Association of Lighting Designers (ALD), Association of Sound Designers (ASD), Autograph, Charcoalblue, Creative Technology, ETC Ltd, ET Now, Foster Wilson Architects, GDS - Global Design Solutions, Haworth Tompkins, Institute of Theatre Consultants (IOTC), Society of British Theatre Designers (SBTD), Society for Theatre Research (STR), Sound Space Vision, TAIT Stage Technologies, The Mackintosh Foundation, Theatreplan, Theatre Projects, Theatres Trust, and White Light.

Professional Members' shows

opening in October and November

Taken 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, you need to enter show credits into your profile after signing in to the Members' area.

October

1 Graham Roberts Joe McElderry Northern Lights Tour / **1 Kelli Zezulka** You Forgot the Mince Civic Theatre, Barnsley, then touring / **1 Michael Grundner** Around The World In 80 Days Musiktheater Linz / **3 James C McFetridge** Two Sore Legs Grand Opera House, Belfast / **5 Andy Webb** Dracula Pound Arts Centre Corsham / **5 Jack Weir** Confessional Southwark Playhouse 'The Little' / **6 Zoe J Spurr** The Knife Of Dawn Roundhouse Studio / **6 James C McFetridge** Guys and Dolls Craic Theatre, Coalisland / **6 Palle Palme** Rock of 80s Swedish Tour / **7 Sherry L Coenen** A Well Remembered Voice OSO Community Arts Centre / **7 Mark Jonathan Askepot** / **7 James C McFetridge** The Cripple of Inishmaan Theatre Mosta, Perm, Russia / **12 Mark Jonathan** Nozze di Figaro Theatre Royal, Glasgow and touring / **13 Johanna E Town** Here I Belong Pentabus Village Hall Tour / **14 Jason Addison** Sherlock Holmes & The Hound of the Baskervilles Bishop Grosseteste University / **14 Mark Jonathan** Madama Butterfly Glyndebourne / **15 Sherry L Coenen** 5 Guys Chillin' King's Head Theatre / **19 Will Burgher** The Wizard of Oz Wyvern Theatre / **19 Sherry L Coenen** Phone Home Shoreditch Town Hall / **20 Kieron Johnson** Untitled Laban Theatre / **22 Peter Harrison** Alfie White: Space Explorer / **26 Graham Roberts** Danny Hero The Core, Corby / **26 Laura Hawkins** Lady Macbeth North Wall Oxford / **27 Sherry L Coenen** Muvvhood Stratford Circus / **27 Tim Mascall** Jumpy Royal Lyceum, Edinburgh / **27 Charlie Morgan Jones** La Cenerentola Belgrade Theatre, Coventry / **28 Mark Jonathan** The Revenger's Tragedy Nottingham Playhouse

November

3 Michael Grundner Winter Wonderettes Kammerspiele Wien / **4 James C McFetridge** 1932 The Mac, Belfast / **6 Malcolm Rippeth** Le Premier Meurtre Opéra de Lille / **7 Nigel A Lewis** She Wears Scented Rose Theatro Technis / **8 Edmund Sutton** Emerge 16 Festival The Space, London Docklands / **8 Ingi Bekk** The Tempest Royal Shakespeare Theatre / **10 Alex Musgrave** Made In Dagenham The Kings Theatre, Portsmouth / **12 Steven Benson** Opera Gala Evening Clonter Opera Theatre / **17 Jason Addison** A Christmas Carol Trinity Arts Centre Gainsborough / **17 Paul Smith** Illusionists - Live From Broadway Les Folies Bergere, Paris / **21 Charlie Morgan Jones** The Wind in the Willows Old Rep Birmingham / **25 Paul Smith** Illusionists - Turn of the Century Lunt Fontanne Theatre, Broadway / **25 Johanna E Town** Great Expectations Guildhall Silk Street / **25 Peter Harrison** Dick Whittington Marlowe Theatre Canterbury / **25 James C McFetridge** Aladdin Waterfront Hall, Belfast / **26 Malcolm Rippeth** A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings Little Angel / **26 Mark Dymock** Dick Whittington Mercury Theatre, Colchester

Contact us

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Focus Magazine

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Editorial team: James Laws, Rob Halliday and Sofia Alexiadou
To submit ideas for articles, correspondence, corrections and any comments about Focus, email editor@ald.org.uk. Owing to space restrictions, we do not accept press releases for publication in Focus. However, company members 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 2016*

New members

Welcome!

Professional Member

Nick Ashcroft, Llangollwn

Nico Bray, Plymouth

Bambi Bueno, Tel Aviv, Israel

Gareth Clowes Fellows, London

Trent Kim, Ayr

Ross McKillop, Inverness*

Martin Robert, Australia

Fridthjofur Thorsteinsson,
London*

Andi Watson, Brighton

Affiliate Member

Holly Ellis, London

Associate Member

John Pearson, Carlisle*

Student Member

Edward Scragg, Stoke-on-Trent

Sponsored Students

Bristol Old Vic School

Ryan Searle

Guildhall School

Chris Needle

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Callum Farquhar

RADA

Jacob Gowler

Teresa Nagel

Jake Stebbings

University of Arts London

Berta Pibernat Trias

Daniel Bowler, Leicestershire

James Cladingboel, Leicestershire

Sam Harris, Middlesex

Jay Meyer, Cheshire


Ben Sassoon, Herts

* Re-joining the association

Diary dates 2016–2017


10–16 October Lewes Light: www.leweslight.uk

25 October NT: 40 Years as a Space for Plays

28 October Monthly members' social evening†
Sponsored by Zero88 Cooper Controls 

30 October The National Theatre: A Place For Plays

14 November Theatrecraft 2016
Waldorf Hilton Hotel, London*

25 November Monthly members' social evening†
Sponsored by SLX 

13 January "Creative Alliance" new year networking party

18–19 January PLASA Focus: Glasgow*

9–10 May PLASA Focus: Leeds*

20–23 May Showlight 2017, Florence, Italy

7–8 June ABTT Theatre Show*

* 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.

GroundControl Grease

LD **Colin Wood** tries out a new followspot system



Colin is a lighting designer and programmer for theatre and live events. He runs Pre Production Services (UK) Ltd, which specialises in Hog 4 and MA2 console hires and is also the UK trainer and support for Hog 4 consoles.

From the first production meeting, it was clear that the New Alexandra Theatre production of Grease was going to be quite a monstrous show from a lighting point of view. We were going big and bold! All of the portals of the hired set were to be removed and replaced with a complex truss structure, surrounded by lighting battens, which is far more appropriate for the size of the New Alexandra stage. It was to be a large-scale, challenging project but it was actually the followspots that were troubling me most in the planning stage. The standard followspot

position has been a bit of an issue for me at this venue on previous productions, with three options: 1. Use the standard position at the rear of the dress circle where the box can only accommodate small fixtures. The angle is also a bit on the shallow side. 2. Use the side positions in the grand circle, where larger spots can be used, but the angle is very steep and wide. 3. Build a platform in the grand circle to rig larger spots in the optimum position, but where multiple seats need to be taken off sale. This is not really an option for the producers of a show likely to sell out.

I approached PRG to arrange a demo of its GroundControl followspot system and was impressed by the responsiveness of the modified Bad Boy fixtures. The system had been

tried and tested in a rock 'n' roll arena environment, where it had replaced backlight truss spots, but never before had they completely replaced an existing FOH followspot for musical theatre. I was planning to rig a pair of the fixtures on a truss right above the grand circle. A concern I had was whether they could offer me the level of refinement a theatrical production required. Also, what level of control would I give the operators and what would I programme into the show? There were so many possibilities. The operators would also be positioned on the OP fly floor and I wondered how they would manage multiple character pickups, purely from a display mounted on the GroundControl unit. After much thought, I decided to take the plunge.

The workhorses of the Grease rig were 48 moving spot and wash LED fixtures; these were accompanied by 85 battens, 28 LED pinspots and a generous number of trusty parcans and profiles too as my side light and FOH coverage. In addition, there were seven LED curtains, which, along with the truss structure, formed the centrepiece of my design. This all required 33 universes of DMX, all programmed by me.





*Grease
New Alexandra Theatre
Directed by Pollyann Tanner
Lighting design by Colin Wood
Photograph by Jim Worrall*

as detailed as my reducing the size of the iris for the pickup on a staircase upstage, then running a cue on the console to open the iris as the actor walked downstage. The rest of the time, when both spots were in use together, they were always the same size, colour and intensity and, as such, they

Once we got into technical rehearsals, it soon became clear how great the GroundControl system was going to work for the show. The output was excellent and far superior to the venue house spots, which was essential given that this was at times a very brightly lit show. However, in more subtle moments, the control I had from the console allowed

for near perfect followspotting. In every cue I was able to programme the intensity for each followspot, as well as the CTO, colour mixing, frost and iris. This meant the operators faded their units to 100% in each of their cues and just made sure they followed the right actor on their screens! When it came to opening night, everything else was automated. At times, this got

blended into the show perfectly.

It almost seemed a shame that after specifying all that technology to replace a manual system, in my eyes, what ultimately made it a success was not even noticing it was there! 🍷

The fallacy of "facelight"

Ben Hughes on articulating a common design problem

We've all been there. The lighting state on stage does not work for the scene. The balance doesn't suit; the composition is not clear. Actors are disappearing into the background, and they are missing shape and any semblance of three-dimensional form. The director, not knowing any better and wanting a quick fix so they can move on, says, "Can we have some more facelight, please?" The experienced designer understands what this actually means – the contrast is wrong, the composition needs to be adjusted, the actor needs to pop out from the scene in a way they currently do not.

But transfer this situation to that of a student lighting designer in an educational institution. First, one of the closest relationships they build is with the director of the production, a director whose primary purpose in the situation is to be teaching actors. Cue the first technical rehearsal. The director cannot see the actors in the way they want. They want to see more of them. The instinctive thing they think to say is the insidious "Can we have more facelight, please?" Unfortunately, the student lighting designer does not have the experience

to interpret this correctly. They find the channel numbers for whatever fixtures they have from the front and turn them up. There is no thought to composition, no consideration towards contrast, no contemplation of shape. Just a simple response to a simplistic request.

At this stage the experienced designer will know that most of the time this happens any subtlety that may have been intended in the design has now gone. The revelation of form and careful composition that light can bring to a scene on stage has been blown out by a misguided attempt to put more light on an actor's face.

It's important to note here for the uninitiated that if we assume "facelight" to be light that just hits an actor's face and nothing else then the vast majority of the time there is no such thing available to the lighting designer. So throwing more light

at a scene in a misguided attempt to just light the actor's face is doomed to fail. In attempting to help the student the director has inadvertently validated a simplistic and unrealistic design approach.

I talked with a teaching director about this recently. I proposed that if I could not hear their student actors in the back row that all the direction they needed to provide was for the actors to "speak louder". They immediately threw their hands up. "No, no, no... I would talk about articulation. I'd ask them to hit the consonants harder. I'd talk about sculpting the vocal delivery to provide clarity

rather than just yell." And then the penny dropped. They realised their approach to interacting with the student lighting designer was akin to asking their acting students to yell so as to hear them better. So they asked a valid question: "What should I say when I can't see the actors in the way I need to?"

"The revelation of form and careful composition that light can bring to a scene on stage has been blown out by a misguided attempt to put more light on an actor's face."

Any lighting designer (particularly those who also teach) would think carefully about the best way to answer this. We don't want to overcomplicate the answer – teaching directors are not lighting designers; they can't be expected to teach lighting design students about lighting. Yet their words have a powerful effect. My suggestion was the following:

- If the overall intensity of light you see on stage is too dark across the entirety of the lit stage picture, then say so, in those terms.
- If the overall intensity of light you see on stage is too bright across the entirety of the lit stage picture, then say so, in those terms.
- If you can't see the actors properly but the general intensity you see on stage seems right have a discussion with the lighting designer about the balance between acting light and the overall composition of the lit stage picture.
- If there is not enough shape and/or clarity, then say so, in those terms.

None of these issues are particularly difficult to identify, but they do require the director to take a few more seconds to clarify their thoughts before they speak to the student designer. This approach provides the student designer a head-start on where to begin to approach the problem from without being pushed down a particular design path. It provides the director with a greater ability to communicate. If the student is properly prepared it will help in achieving a better outcome for everyone involved. And it will stop those teaching lighting design from pulling their hair out when all their careful teaching ends up being thrown out in the heat of the technical rehearsal. 🚫



Ben's lighting design practice spans theatre, opera, dance and concert events. Ben is also associate artistic director of contemporary theatre company The Danger Ensemble, and lectures in lighting design and scenography at Queensland University of Technology. He is based in Brisbane, Australia. www.elysianblue.net

Knight of Illumination awards

Lighting designers are the unseen heroes of the theatre, says **Matt Trueman**

Forget BAFTA masks and teeny busts of Laurence Olivier. You know what they dish out at the Knight of Illumination awards? Swords. Full-sized, silver-forged medieval battle swords. Try getting one of them home on the tube afterwards, let alone finding space on your mantelpiece. (One winner, I'm told, turned his into a coffee table, *Sword in the Stone* style.)

Last night, the Knights of Illumination armed a ninth set of lighting designers for their work on stage, screen and in stadia. In the theatre categories, Mark Henderson won for the spidery silhouettes of *Sunset Boulevard* at the ENO, framing the orchestra as an integral part of the overall aesthetic, while Jan Versweyveld's undulating and unsettling work on *Songs From Far Away* at the Young Vic proved the pick of the year's plays. It wasn't just the soupy beige wash he overlaid, a tonal expression of the protagonist's grief, but the way he conjured time with light; stop-motion shadows juddering across the stage as if the sun was speeding past overhead, entire days distilled down to a few seconds.

Elsewhere, Will Duke won the video design category – projection, of course,

working entirely through light – for his contribution to Complicite's *The Encounter*. Ironically, that show most obviously celebrated sound, but Duke's projections underpinned its every effect, not just suggesting the stage stand in for an Amazonian rainforest, but making the theatre itself seem fluid and so heightening the hallucination at the story's heart.

I've been privileged to sit on the judging panel for the first time, and it's been – what else – an illuminating process. Doing so has forced me, every night, to check in with the lighting: what it's up to and why.

I admired the angular, expressionist shadows Lucy Carter cast on the miners of *Husbands and Sons*; the shimmering surface and gloomy depths Guy Hoare sunk into *The Deep Blue Sea*; the stark, sweat-glinting glare that Mimi Jordan Sherin threw out of *The Hairy Ape*'s furnaces. Much more beside: Jon Clark's dark, dark voids in *Richard III* at the Almeida and Jane Cox's sallow, strip-lit glows in *The Flick*; the glinting idylls of *As You Like It* and *Unreachable*; Lee Curran carving up space in Hofesh Schectet's

shows. I saw productions, too, that were driven by their lighting designs: *YOUARENOWHERE* with its strobe-speed, channel-hopping shifts, and *The Haunting of Hill House*, in which the fluid, ghostly projections by 59 Productions allowed the stage to suggest the supernatural and, indeed, to scare audiences.

And yet, as a critic – indeed, as an audience member – it's all too easy to overlook lighting design.

There's thinking behind the sword thing. Swords are symbols of light; the glint of sunlight on a clean metal blade. That image is the stuff of stories the world over – from the lightsabers of Star Wars to the shining swords of Celtic myths. Swords are associated with nobility, divinity and sovereignty; with purpose, skill and virtue. With men too perhaps – tricky for such a bloke-heavy industry – but by no means exclusively so: warrior women wield them too. Either way, they belong in the hands of heroes. Put it this way: you can't ignore anyone who's holding a three-foot broadsword.

Lighting designers are the unseen heroes of the theatre. Without them, the

art-form would be greatly diminished. Not – as the easy quip goes – because we'd have dark stages and invisible actors. Rather because their work animates theatre. It gives it texture and depth, turns stages into spaces and makes scenery credible. Lighting punctuates performance.

It gets short shrift in reviews. You rarely see an LD plucked out for praise (or, indeed, blame). For my part, that's not entirely unintentional. Reviews shouldn't work like school reports, dishing out gold stars for the good work of

individuals. They should try to capture and convey something of the whole; what a show feels like, overall, for audiences.

Partly, it's to do with the old mantra that good lighting is lighting you don't notice: as unobtrusive, yet integral, as a film's score. Lighting can set your subconscious alight. It transforms tone and instils rhythm – just think of the

difference between a snap blackout and a ten second crossfade – and, at another level, it marshalls your attention around the stage, serving other elements. Lighting directs as much as it designs. It dances. It acts. It performs.

It is, however, bloody hard to write about. Light is intangible and immaterial. It takes place in time and leaves no trace – in a sense, the essence of theatre. Light refuses to be pinned down, resists definition

and description. Anthony Neilson's *Unreachable*, all about a film director seeking a very particular, perhaps perfect, kind of light, showed him struggling to find the words to communicate what he was after. "It's the smell of the sound of the colour of the feeling of life," he said, clutching at sensory straws. Light is largely ineffable. Interviewing Paule Constable

"Their work animates theatre. It gives it texture and depth, turns stages into spaces and makes scenery credible. Lighting punctuates performance."

– one of our very best LDs – a couple of years ago, she explained how her process relies on images and references to explain her ideas: "Nobody knows how to talk about lighting design."

It's time we changed that, and the Knight of Illumination awards are a great start, not just by forcing its rotating panel of critics to focus on the focusing, but by putting lighting designers right in the spotlight. Maybe the sword is mightier than the pen after all. 🗡️

Matt Trueman is Variety's London theatre critic and chief critic at WhatsOnStage.com.

This article was originally published in WhatsOnStage – www.whatsonstage.com – on 19 September 2016.



Knight of Illumination awards

The winners of the 2016 KOI awards

This year's theatre judging panel:

Chair: David Benedict

Dance:

Jonathan Gray – The Dancing Times

Mark Monahan – The Daily Telegraph

Musicals and plays:

Georgina Brown – The Mail on Sunday

Matt Trueman – Variety

Opera:

Alexandra Coghlan – The Spectator

Richard Fairman – Financial Times

Songs from Far Away

Young Vic

Director: Ivo van Hove

Designer: Jan Versweyveld

Lighting designer: Jan Versweyveld

Photographer: Jan Versweyveld



PLAYS

Jan Versweyveld

Songs From Far Away

Young Vic

The judges awarded the 2016 KOI award for plays to Jan Versweyveld “for integrating suggestive lighting into his own set design that evoked not just space and tone but time in *Songs From Far Away* at the Young Vic”.



Songs from Far Away
Young Vic
Director: Ivo van Hove
Designer: Jan Versweyveld
Lighting designer: Jan Versweyveld
Photographer: Jan Versweyveld

Knight of Illumination awards

MUSICALS

Mark Henderson
Sunset Boulevard
English National Opera

The judges awarded the 2016 KOI award for musicals to Mark Henderson “for his vivid use of shadow, silhouette and imagination bringing high drama to a semi-staged presentation of Sunset Boulevard at English National Opera”.

*Sunset Boulevard
English National Opera
Director: Lonny Price
Designer: James Noone
Lighting designer: Mark Henderson
Photographer: Richard Hubert Smith*



Sunset Boulevard
English National Opera
Director: Lonny Price
Designer: James Noone
Lighting designer: Mark Henderson
Photographer: Richard Hubert Smith



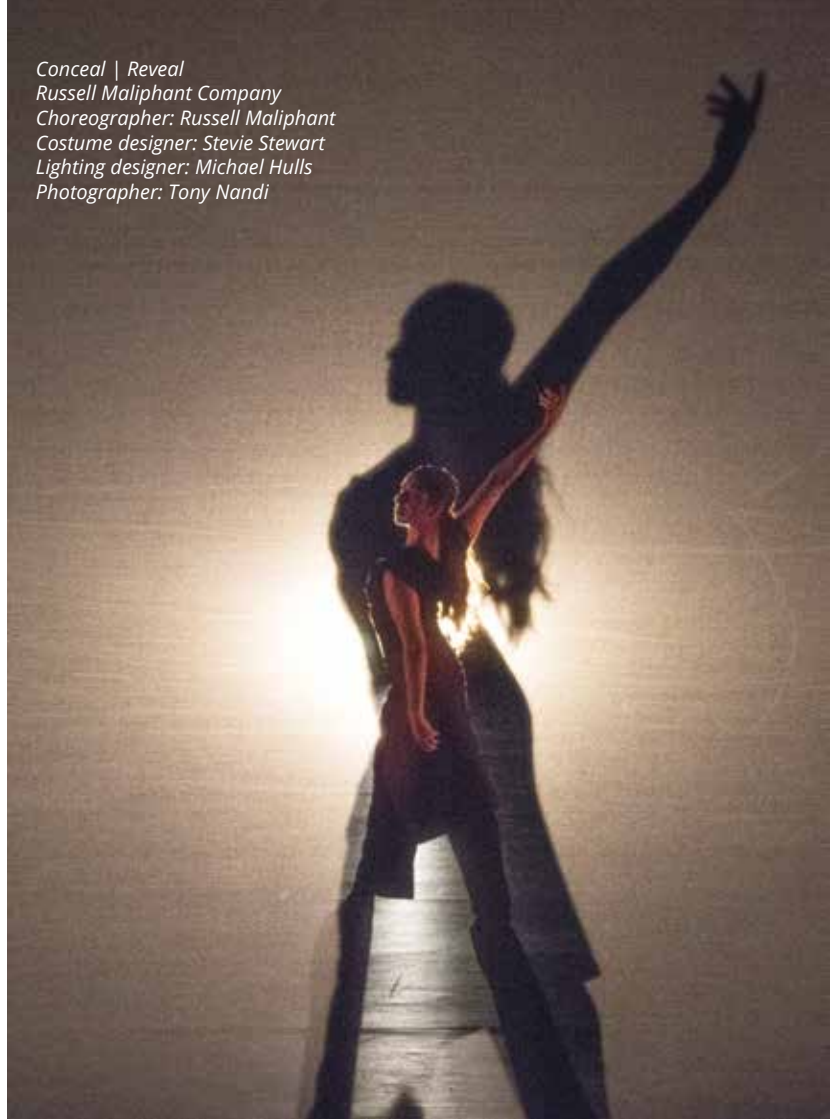
Knight of Illumination awards

DANCE

Michael Hulls
Conceal | Reveal
Russell Maliphant Company,
Sadler's Wells

The judges awarded the 2016 KOI award for dance to Michael Hulls "for his creation and control of dramatic spaces and truly embodying the title of Conceal | Reveal by the Russell Maliphant Company at Sadler's Wells".

*Conceal | Reveal
Russell Maliphant Company
Choreographer: Russell Maliphant
Costume designer: Stevie Stewart
Lighting designer: Michael Hulls
Photographer: Tony Nandi*



Conceal | Reveal
Russell Maliphant Company
Choreographer: Russell Maliphant
Costume designer: Stevie Stewart
Lighting designer: Michael Hulls
Photographer: Hugo Glendinning



Knight of Illumination awards

CONCERT: ARENA Patrick Woodroffe
Adele

*Adele at Manchester Arena
Lighting design by Patrick Woodroffe
Photograph by Ralph Larmann*



*Adele at Manchester Arena
Lighting design by Patrick Woodroffe
Photograph by Ralph Larmann*



Knight of Illumination awards

TELEVISION: EVENTS

Bernie Davis

BBC Proms Season 2015/2016



BBC Proms
Lighting design by Bernie Davis



*BBC Proms
Lighting design by Bernie Davis*



*BBC Proms
Lighting design by Bernie Davis*

Knight of Illumination awards

OPERA

Joachim Klein

Saul

Glyndebourne Festival

The judges awarded the 2016 KOI award for opera to Joachim Klein “for his counterintuitive approach and the dramatic intensity of his lighting making Handel’s Saul at the Glyndebourne Festival look like it was painted by Caravaggio”.

*Saul
Glyndebourne Festival
Director: Barrie Kosky
Designer: Katrin Lea Tag
Lighting designer: Joachim Klein
Photographer: Bill Cooper*



PROJECTION

Will Duke

The Encounter






























Edinburgh International
Festival/The Barbican

The judges awarded the 2016 KOI award for opera to Joachim Klein “for the unworldly, powerfully suggestive restraint of his wall of images that rippled to almost hallucinatory effect in Simon McBurney’s The Encounter at the Edinburgh International Festival”.

The Encounter
Complicite/EIF/Barbican
Director: Simon McBurney
Designer: Michael Levine
Lighting designer: Paul Anderson
Projection designer: Will Duke
Photographer: Robbie Jack



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