

ALD # FOCUS e

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

October/November 2020

- Highlights in this issue:*
- Sleepless in Wembley Park
 - Howell Binkley remembered
 - Designing remotely
 - Lighting for Zoom
- ...and much, much more...
Price to non-members £5.00

Sleepless, a Musical Romance
Director: Morgan Young
Set designer: Morgan Large
Costume designer: Sue Simmerling
Video designer: Ian William Galloway
Lighting designer: Ken Billington
Associate lighting designer: Dale Driscoll
Lighting programmer: Victoria Brennan

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From the chair...

We are now well and truly in autumn. The leaves are turning beautiful shades of golden orange, but not much seems to be changing in the world of live performance. Pieces of work are being made here and there, and work is thankfully being digitally produced – all of which I support as it does give a sense of hope and, most importantly, worth. We have some interesting articles on both digital and live performances in this issue, including Ken Billington writing about opening *Sleepless* and all its challenges.

Realistically, it seems there will be little change in our workflow until spring, and though it feels weird to write it I feel I should share what we are hearing and let you know the possibilities being presented. We all need to be prepared and plan for our futures, but without much discussion happening and the constant change in directives from the government, it is hard to know what to do. This lack of knowing, being unable to plan, is causing much anxiety, not just for us but also for performance makers and suppliers who employ us.

With all this in mind, the ALD continues to support PLASA's #Wemakeevents:

recently we saw the production industry standing silently outside Parliament Square; we helped promote the global #lightinred day; and our very own Ian Saunders joined the bike ride for a couple of days on the south coast to raise money for charity. A big thank you to the main riders who completed the whole journey – well done.

This month AAPTLE issued a joint statement from the associations asking for producers to sign up and commit to not allowing the conditions and wages of freelancers and staff to deteriorate in the coming years (see page 28). This was a campaign lead by the ALD, FMTW and Scene Change and solidified with the support of the whole of AAPTLE. We were very pleased to see it printed in full in the Stage. On a more personal level, please also read Joe Price's article (page 26), which I think has some good reflections on what we all might be facing in the future and how to deal with it.

Joe shared his situation with the rest of the Exec, partly to ask for advice but also to inform us of his situation. When the ALD is empowered with this kind of knowledge it allows us to fight and shout louder. We are not dealing with



Johanna Town
ALD chair

hearsay but with reality, and it does empower us to explain to Equity, BECTU and producers that we as freelancers can no longer take the extra burden of poor conditions and wages for the sake of keeping the arts industry alive. So I ask everyone to share any information – no names quoted, of course – and be part of helping us keep the industry sustainable for all to work in. We are of course also here to help with advice through Liteline (liteline@ald.org.uk).

Our Wellbeing group has started its campaign to get us all out walking and talking, starting with a walk for Mental Health Day earlier in the month. I know I personally enjoyed taking some time out with my partner and our dog to just be in nature and escape the everyday grind of constant governmental change. On another wellbeing level, I hope everyone is enjoying their Lumière 2020 and

From the chair...

Johanna Town

Team Lumière gatherings. Having the opportunity to share and talk lighting helps remind us why we do the job we love and that we are not alone in our experience. Thank you to everyone who is involved in these sessions; they are so important on so many levels.

I also had the pleasure this month in judging the ALD/Michael Northen awards. Thank you to everyone who entered. There was great deliberation among the judges over all the submissions, and it was hard to make the final choices, so

well done to everyone who took part and congratulations to our winners. See page 47 for the winners; a full report will be in the December/January issue of *Focus*.

Our members' socials and talks continue every last Thursday of the month, so please do keep coming and saying hello. The team works hard to put these events together, and we want to share them with as many people as possible. Soon we will be opening up the door a little with some Zoom socials, which I hope you will all join in with and share with others in

the industry. If I have learned anything over these past few months it's that we are one big team of people who make shows: lighting designers, programmers, production electricians, lighting techs and suppliers, freelance or in house. We all have one thing in common: a passion and love for our industry and we all need to work together to make it a better future. I hope you enjoy this month's *Focus* and come and join us for a drink soon.

Jo 🍷



Postcard from Australia

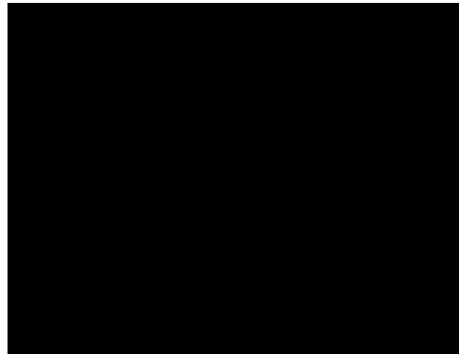
Nick Schlieper

As you can see, this isn't the usual postcard from parts exotic. The picture obviously represents our theatres in their current state. But even though, as the Australian government would have it, "we're all in this together" (well, that's what you get when your prime minister used to be in marketing), there are some notable differences between the Mother Country and her former Australian colony at the moment.

The biggest difference could best be summed up as 1.3 billion pounds. That's the difference between the British government's 1.5 billion pound support package and the Australian government's measly 350 million dollars. I hear that Boris hasn't started splashing much of this cash about yet, but at least the promise and the all-important gesture is there. The gesture that says that what we do matters and that people care about it, miss it and want it back in their lives. Badly enough to pay for it. I never in my wildest dreams thought I'd ever have a good word to say about Boris Johnson, but my disgust at the attitude of the Australian government is such that he's starting to look positively civilised.

The second big difference can also be expressed in numbers – of a very sobering kind. I'm talking of course about relative

infection and mortality figures. You may be aware that Australia was the preening poster boy of the initial lockdown back in March to June, trumpeting its success at containing the initial outbreak, while



the aforementioned Boris irresponsibly pursued herd immunity. While that's changed a bit now, with Melbourne in full lockdown in the midst of a much worse second wave, the figures here still pale into insignificance by comparison to the UK. However it's still awful, it's still scary and our theatres are still closed.

And yet, there are small sputterings of light, at least in Sydney. Back in July when I read Lucy Carter's terrific piece

about living in Covid times, I sometimes wondered whether I'd ever work again, and yet I'm now in rehearsals for a new show. Whether we'll actually get to perform it (to 149 people dotted throughout an 865-seat theatre) remains to be seen, but we've designed it, we're rehearsing it and, according to the schedule, we'll bump it in in mid-September.

So there is light at the end of the tunnel and there is hope. But the other problem remains. Of the many things that the pandemic has thrown into sharp focus, the parlous state of public support for the arts would have to be one. I firmly believe that the lesson we need to learn from this is to lobby harder. Much harder. A post-Covid return to a "normal" that was already fundamentally broken will not suffice. Our arts organisations have taken such a battering that no amount of bailouts will suffice, unless we come back on the basis of a much more realistic level of funding. And that's where the differences end! 🚩

Addendum: Since writing this, my show, Wonnangatta, has opened and is playing (to 149 people per night), and the government's \$350 million package miraculously seems to have shrunk to \$250 million...

Remembering and forgetting

Lucy Carter has been doing lots of both...



Since March I have been remembering and forgetting how to do many things. In fact, so many things have been remembered and forgotten that I am not surprised I haven't achieved much in the last six months. In no particular order, I have learnt how to relax and chill and do nothing – I even once realised I had read the Saturday newspaper for nearly two hours without moving! I have learnt I can spend time with my family without feeling irritated, and that I like my family a lot. I have semi-successfully learnt how to grow tomatoes and courgettes. I have learnt who my friends are because they have kept in touch and have been checking how we are doing. I have learnt much more about friends',

colleagues' and acquaintances' political leanings, as we have polarised our opinions and have more time and reasons to discuss things. I have learnt how unprotected we are as a workforce, how the industry I have dedicated much of my life to, in time and effort and to the detriment of my personal life, is not built of solid foundations and I am not in a safe and secure profession that I can rely on to provide work so I can support my family. I have learnt I made a mistake 20 years ago selecting a life partner who also works in the same profession, by turn making the situation much more precarious! A lot of what I have learnt has shocked me to the core; even discovering that gardening is rewarding is surprising to me. All these revelations have kept me occupied, if not busy.

I seem to have forgotten some stuff too. I definitely have forgotten how to multitask and juggle family life and work. It's one task at a time now, thank you very much, and don't ask me to cope with any tasks much before 10am and after 4pm because my body and brain need to sit down after all the learning I have been doing for six hours. I have definitely forgotten how to work 13 hours a day for six days a week, for weeks on end. I will not be managing to

get ready, have lunch made, be showered, put makeup on, have my bag packed and my skirt not tucked in my knickers by 8am, with travel cup and water bottle ready – and now with the new essential items of hand sanitiser, face masks and tissues added to the list – alongside getting the children up, fed, ready and delivered to school, anytime soon. I seem to also have forgotten how to respond to emails immediately without a whole day to contemplate the right wording. I have forgotten how to do spreadsheets, how to open Vectorworks files, and therefore I have totally forgotten how to light a show. As if all this wasn't enough to forget, the other day I fell over in the street carrying an unopened bottle of red wine! As my friend stood over me laughing and telling me I looked like an alcoholic, I realised with dismay I had even forgotten how to walk as well!

I spend quite a lot of my allocated six hours a day worrying not just about the obvious (will I ever work again?) but also CAN I work again? Will I be able to do it? Have I lost the will and the drive needed? How will I cope with being away from the family again, now I have learnt to be with them and enjoy it? How will I have time for relaxation, exercise, a good diet and

enough sleep? How will I remember to check my skirt isn't tucked into my knickers and that I have packed my KeepCup and reusable knife, fork and spoon? Honestly at this point in time I don't think I can do it anymore.

I have spent a considerable amount of time in the last six months in Zoom meetings on behalf of the ALD, the industry and myself discussing how to come out of this situation in a new and better way, with some of the problems and negative aspects of our industry fixed or improved upon in some way. This was at the beginning, when we imagined it might last a couple of months and then theatres would reopen. Gradually those conversations changed to do they (the theatres, producers and government) even know we are here and are they willing to help solve the problems and creatively help imagine a way out of our predicament. Next up it was how can we protect ourselves, our members, our colleagues and our collaborators from unethical practices and reduced terms and conditions when the industry does start back. Now it feels like we are discussing how to ensure that the new reduced fees, terms and conditions and working practices only last for a short period of time, in the

hour of need for the industry, before things can go back to the way they were. No! Not back to the way they were, surely?

I condense and reduce the discussions of the last six months for the sake of making a point for this article. There is a lot more going on, being discussed, established, actioned and committed to by way of positively emerging in a better way, from many theatres, producers, creatives and professionals. However, what I have spent a few additional unscheduled hours worrying about, in those three hours in the middle of the night where I am awake and my mind is stressing and overthinking, has been, is there REALLY a way to learn from this as an industry and emerge in a new and better way; is there REALLY a way where I can apply the things I have learnt and continue to do the new things I like doing, and have made me feel better, and for me to have a better work-life balance? I don't know, and my unscheduled nocturnal hours have been mostly dedicated to wondering how these things could work and happen in the future and to considering how, during my scheduled six hours, I could help make it happen?

With all this activity it's no wonder my work to-do list didn't get any shorter,

and in fact, it got longer. I have talked previously about my obsessive list-making – well, why oh why, every week for the last six months, have I rewritten “sort out old shows and archives”, “clear all emails”, “clear down desktop and hard drive”, “sort out website” and “tidy office” EVERY SINGLE WEEK!? I actually now realise that by not doing those jobs that feel massive and chore-like has provided me with some more tasks to fill my day with, such as worrying and berating myself for not getting my arse in gear and getting on with those tasks. That can fill at least twenty to forty minutes each and every day! What else could I do for a career (forty minutes), should I apply for a job at Tesco or Sainsbury's yet or will I get offered a lighting job soon (110 minutes), and so on. Busy busy busy!

So after all that navel-gazing and self-pity, I DO have some things to report on that we have been getting on with at the ALD. We have run some more professional members' surgeries and will be doing some more. The dates will be sent out in the weekly ALD email bulletins, so keep your eye out and come along to discuss whatever you like with like-minded colleagues. It has been the case that suggestions and discussions members have had in those

Remembering and forgetting

Lucy Carter

surgeries have provided David Ayton and me, as your Professional reps, with things to action and investigate. It is great to feel like we are working for you as your reps as opposed to inventing the ideas ourselves all the time. We are working alongside the Wellbeing, Diversity and Meetings working groups to offer more training, CPD and support and networking opportunities for you all, in response to your suggestions. People who have attended have also sent messages saying how great it has been to connect and share with people who are in the same situations. So do try to come along.

I hear tell from lighting folk, other creatives and other backstage associations and groups that people are being offered lesser fees and daily rates than before the pandemic! I do not understand this. My hairdresser is charging more for her services. The same haircut now costs more, because she can fit fewer customers in each day due to the cleaning regime and not being able to have customers cross over or wait in the salon. Her hairdressing association recommended they charge more. Same for dog groomers: prices have gone up twice since lockdown. Do we not provide a service also? We will not be able to take the same number of jobs we

previously did; there won't be as many, but also jobs will take more time because of Covid precautions and so we can fit fewer in. Why, then, should we be taking smaller fees, for the same amount of work – if not more work – as our days spent on each job will extend? I simply do not understand how or why we are being asked to work for less for the same haircut, so to speak. I appreciate we all need the money desperately and therefore producers and theatres are in a strong position, but unless you can pay people correctly for the work you want them to do, then don't put the show on. Please take care as and when you are offered work to make sure you talk to other members of the teams you will be working with, to at least make sure there is parity of pay and terms within your team. Try to talk to each other and speak as one to ensure you are all being treated as fairly as you possibly can. You are always much stronger together so reach out and talk. Reach out to the ALD for support and suggestions if it gets difficult. Equity really wants to be informed if there are unethical practices occurring, even if you are not a member of Equity. The new Equity general secretary-elect, Paul Fleming, said this to us in a meeting we had with him.

Finally, I have been mastering some new skills that might make my return to lighting design less time consuming and travel biased, which may in turn mean I can hold on to doing the new things I have learnt are important to me. I have learnt how to communicate via Slack, Zoom, Trello, Microsoft Teams and Google Teams. I have learnt to compile creative documents, live with other collaborators on Google Slides, and how to edit documents in real time with colleagues. I have learnt a more remote way of working, as I am sure you all have, and this will hopefully mean that we CAN carry some of these ways of working into the new improved versions of theatre and live performance. These will be the things that lead us all into a more sustainable, diverse, fairer, kinder, safer, healthier and efficient way of working that I DO truly believe is attainable for our industry if we only keep remembering what has been imagined and discussed in terms of better ways, and we forget the ways we previously did things as default that weren't progressive and supportive in any way. My finger and toes are crossed for all of us. 🍀

New Exec members

Zoe Spurr and Nick Woolley introduce themselves



It's an honour to be joining the ALD Exec as your Equity representative and to have the opportunity to change our world of lighting for the better.

I've sat on the Equity Director

and Designer Committee for nearly a year, but due to COVID I have been able to gain a better insight on how Equity operates and how beneficial being part of a union is when the going gets rough. COVID has exposed a lot of problems with the way our industry operates. Of course, we know these problems exist, but how can we be heard? The Equity Director and Designer Committee has been negotiating hard for a new temporary COVID contract. SOLT/UK Theatre suggested the necessity for a new temporary contract and through some strong negotiating we feel we have not only been heard but have also highlighted vital parts of our processes which often feel "behind closed doors", meaning our

creative practices are better understood (or getting there anyway!). Our aim is to return with great ambition, determination and energy to change our industry for the better and, seeing the amount of passion and dedication within the ALD Exec and Equity, and also AAPTLE, I believe we have a fire in us to become stronger than ever.



We might not have the best of unions in our industry, but they only get better if we engage to make them better. That's why I've recently become the new,

and first ever, Bectu rep for the ALD. I'm, when allowed, a self-employed production electrician, after a few years at the NT and several years of touring before that.

I've been a member of the ALD since I was a kid, attending the AGMs when I was still at school (those of you who know me know how much of a cool kid I am). I'm going to be involved in the excellent work that Lucy

and David have started and try to get more engagement with the technical strands of our industry, people that are conventionally represented by Bectu.

There is a lot to do to make Bectu work for us, but in the current climate it's a very important task. They have become very aware that their engagement with theatre freelancers has been poor and hopefully over the coming months we'll see a change of their stance with this. They are working on a new deal for freelancers, and I'll let you know how this goes. There have also been a series of variations made to the SOLT agreement, and you can download the most up-to-date version from the Bectu website.

In the meantime, please make sure to check that you're in the correct division, which is Art and Entertainment (several members are incorrectly placed in the Film and TV division). You can do this by emailing membership@bectu.org.uk. If you aren't in the correct division then unfortunately you won't get any information that is relevant to you.

It's an exciting time to be part of an association like the ALD. Get in touch if you think you can help/impart information: bectu@ald.org.uk. 🍷

In praise of colleagues...

Mark Jonathan applauds the generosity of our industry



Something incredible is happening that fills me with pride and admiration. In the last month, Lumière 20:20 has been launched. Circumstances have meant that the scheme has had to be re-invented and what has emerged is incredible. What the Lumière committee, comprised of chair and former Lumière Charlotte Burton, long-time Lumière manager Katharine Williams, Malcolm Rippeth, David Howe, Peter Mumford and Tamykha Patterson, have created is amazing. Please see page 40 for the full story. Along with the individual mentoring scheme for 38 emerging LDs, Team Lumière was created, with Rory Beaton brought on board to manage this. While this team of 22 doesn't

have an individual mentor, they get three talks a week from an extraordinary array of LDs both from the team of mentors and guest LDs. This is an incredible feat put together and chaired with incisive brilliance by Rory. What an immense achievement this is. The success of the entire Lumière project relies on the collegiate spirit of so many LDs who are acting as mentors to the next generation, and it's heartwarming to see this level of generosity and enthusiasm.

We are already on week four and our subjects so far have covered getting started, inspiration, managing when things go wrong, flexibility and working with music. Our current subject is "how to get what you want". However, I may have to re-title this: "How to cope when you're not given what you want!" Rory's team of speakers so far has included Simon Wilkinson, Lucy Carter, Neil Austin, Howard Hudson, Lizzie Powell, Jessica Hung Han Yun, Bruno Poet, Prema Mehta, Declan Randall, Johanna Town, Tim Mitchell, Malcolm Rippeth, Lee Curran, Mark Jonathan, James Farncombe, Rob Sinclair, Kate Bonney, Simon Hayes, Nic Farman, Pete Lambert, Martin Chisnall and Aideen Malone. We have all been treated

to a special talk by Patrick Woodroffe on the history of rock and roll lighting with some wonderful archive photos that took us back to before moving lights and even before parcans. The ever-engaging Patrick included a potted history of his progression as a lighting designer, with tales of working with some of the greatest rock and roll performers, from ABBA and Elton John to the Rolling Stones, and of course his epic lighting for the opening of the 2012 Olympics.

While everyone working freelance has lost all their theatre and event work, some have been furloughed and others have been made redundant, which is devastating. But along with the ALD Lumière 20:20 it's been wonderful to see how our members and the ALD Executive have taken advantage of having time on their hands to create so much. The recent online "bootcamp" for assistant and associate LDs created by Tim Deiling, which ran intensely for a week, was a truly remarkable event.

If Covid has taught us anything, it's how to work together and communicate without being in the same room. This has made both Tim Deiling's associate LD

bootcamp and the Lumière 20:20 more accessible, with Lumière and mentor designers joining from the whole of the UK, as well as across Europe, USA, Australia and Malaysia. On the “meet and greet” of the Lumière scheme we were all asked what we had learned during our lockdown. I had learned to grow vegetables and run daily 5Ks, but I was very taken with the Lumière who took up tap dancing. I have always fancied trying that out. Meanwhile, Ken Billington remarked that if the lockdown was a dress rehearsal for retirement he wasn't going to go to the performance! I should offer compliments to Ken, who was the first LD to open a musical indoors with social distancing in the guise of *Sleepless* (see page 18). What a splendid production that was. I was intrigued to go to the Troubadour in Wembley and see how social distancing and temperature checks of the entire audience were managed. Top marks to all involved. The company performed with vibrant energy on a very clever set design by Morgan Large, gorgeous costume design by Sue Simmerling, dynamic lighting by Ken Billington with clever video design by Ian William Galloway. I felt the distanced audience, sprinkled across the spacious

Troubadour, struggled to reciprocate the stage energy from behind their compulsory masks. I think we have all found wearing masks is hard work.

Lucy Carter and David Ayton have started to run regular surgeries for all Professional members, covering both design and production issues. Again, this initiative is much more practical by Zoom.

The Professional working group meets on a weekly basis and is chaired by LD Lucy Carter and programmer David Ayton, who are joint Professional reps, supported by Stuart Porter, Jo Town, Nick Woolley and me. We are also indebted to John Leventhall for his considerable labour in converting our documentation to the ALD website. We now have a portfolio of contract guidelines and checklists for lighting designers, video designers, assistant and associate LDs, production



*#WeMakeEvents projections on Endeavour House, Ipswich
Photo courtesy of Green Spark*

LX, programmers and lighting technicians, demonstrating our commitment to all members of the lighting and video team. The ALD is stronger with its incorporation of everyone working on production lighting and video. We have a Producers' Guide to working with members and our members' commitment to providing a quality service in the ALD Professional Working Practice document. Guides to sustainability and to wellbeing are in preparation too. We are also looking at training opportunities in diversity and inclusion.

The bringing together of all the professional associations was spearheaded by the ALD and resulted in the formation of AAPTLE (Alliance of Associations

In praise of colleagues...

Mark Jonathan

and Professionals for Theatre and Live Entertainment), which incorporates the ABTT, ALD, ASAM, ASD, CITA, FMTW, FTF, MDA, PIPA, PMA, PMF, SBTD, Scene Change, SDUK, SMA, Stage Sight and Video Code. The result of creating this powerhouse has enabled weekly meetings including with Equity and Bectu, among others. The most recent open statement about payment during and post Covid has just been published, which I urge you to read if you haven't yet: www.aaptle.uk.

We are extremely lucky to have the incredible Jo Town not only as our chair but also leading the creation of AAPTLE. Jo seems to have boundless energy and has been a driving force in so many initiatives during Covid. Thanks, Jo – I know you're looking forward to getting a rest when you get back to your regular long hours at the production desk! In fact, Jo has gone back to work, jumping right in the deep end with an epic creation at the Jermyn Street Theatre, which will be filmed and involves 15 monologues by 15 writers, three directors, three designers and one brilliant LD!

There have been two Red Alert days and, in the most recent one, arts buildings

everywhere were lit up, starting in New Zealand and spreading across the world as the sun set in various time zones. I was intrigued to hear from my Suffolk-based Lumière, Callum Macdonald, that after Suffolk Council and BT declined to have their buildings lit red that someone drove around and lit them red anyway! Meanwhile, Callum was joined by fellow Lumière Tom Lightbody and four light and sound colleagues to make a socially distanced, boy band "homage" in red (see photo).

My other Lumière is Gianni Bertoli, who is based in Florence. He tells me that the opera houses at Florence, Rome, Venice and Milan are opening back up and that he will be working as associate LD on the next opera in Florence. He also told me that our mutual friend, ALD member Bernd Pukrabek, was lighting *Porgy and Bess* at the Theater an der

Wien in Vienna. It's interesting to see which countries feel it's safe to reopen their theatres. A week later, although Gianni had been to see *Zaide* in Rome, lit by Giuseppe Di Iorio, he was less confident about how things were going Covid-wise in Italy. As we go to print, I hear from Gianni that theatres there are to close for at least one month. Here in the UK, things have started to be shut down again, not long after the news had just been broadcast that "everything is fine now" as the UK National Lottery is funding the presentation of ten pantos in



Tom Lightbody (Lumière), Justin Goad, Jake Moore, Jon Terry, Callum Macdonald (Lumière), Tim Speight



the UK. It is interesting also to see that the NT's normal 1,200-seat Olivier Theatre is being reconfigured in the round to create a mere 500 socially distanced seats for *Dick Whittington*. Well, that's great but I hope the government doesn't think that's sufficient and that they can sit back now. Some of the headlines on the BBC and other media have made it sound like all pantos have been saved, which is not the case. With the panto announcement came one from Sir Cameron Mackintosh that the concert version of *Les Mis* will play over Christmas. Although the Sondheim will be open at Christmas, Sir Cameron is quite clear that he doesn't expect any of his other theatres or productions to open before the spring, and from others I hear April or May. So, that will be 13 or 14 months we have suffered the closure for. I fear that unless

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social distancing is ended, we may face an even longer period.

While I applaud those of you who have enterprisingly managed to do something else during the enforced closure of theatres, the government's suggestion that people in the arts should re-train for a more useful job is an outrageous disgrace. I understand the picture of Fatima (*left*) was first advertised a year ago and, as I write, after receiving a severe barracking, Oliver Dowden, the secretary of state for DCMS, has instructed that it be taken down.

Let's have a big cheer for the fantastic and amazing senior lighting manager Les Bone, who is retiring from the ROH after 42 and half years' committed service to lighting at



the ROH. Les was adored by ballerinas and technical and production staff alike. I always felt secure when I saw Les was around. One of my favourite memories was being on tour with the Royal Ballet in Mexico, which I was having to light using a local generic rig. Les had handed a colour swatchbook and the touring box of colour to the local staff and asked them to sort out the colour call, which they duly did and the colour was inserted in the rig. As I started to focus, I found that the dark blue (Lee 120) seemed to be a very pale green (Lee 121). The local staff had selected the colour after the number in the swatch book rather than the one before. I think I said something like: "I'll just go for a long lunch shall I, Les?"

Also retiring from the ROH lighting department is John Charlton after an incredible 52 years! John and I worked together many times. As lighting manager, he would patiently guide generations of LDs through the "forest" that was the ROH lighting rig, providing endless congenial and calm encouragement. You could not ask for more supportive and brilliant colleagues. Best wishes, Les and John.

Last issue, I introduced the series "My favourite show". I'm delighted that, in this issue, production electrician Nick Woolley reminisces on his earlier experiences on tour and at the National Theatre. ALD members are invited to send in their favourite show too. It can be a show you have designed or worked on or just a production you saw and why it blew you away. 🌸

My favourite shows

Nick Woolley recalls some better times

Before I delved into the murky freelance world I toured for years. I was lucky to be involved with some pretty large shows, such as *Oliver!* This was Cameron Mackintosh's version based on its larger sibling that had been in Drury Lane. I toured, as deputy chief, for just over a year all over the UK. This is one of those shows where everything aligned to make it a really good year. We were really supported by Paule Constable and Rob Casey, showing that the care you put into your touring team really pays off. This is something that can be so easily forgotten when people go back to the "real world" after the show has opened. The show looked and sounded great, and it was a privilege (and sometimes a right pain!) to fit it into theatres on the UK touring circuit. I also met my wife on this show, and we named our cat after the heroine, Nancy.

At the National Theatre I worked in the Dorfman, which produced plays (and the occasional musical) at an alarming rate.



Working in the Dorfman Theatre at the National

In my three years there I was involved with over 30 new productions. It's hard to pick a favourite because they were all so different. I started during the run of *Here Lies Love*, which was pretty crazy. My touring days had prepared me for large rigs, but I've never seen so many parcans in such a tiny space. The show ran for three months and only after the load out did I discover hidden parts of the

venue. I think some of my colleagues are still getting over it! A show that stands out is *The Flick*, designed by Jane Cox and her associate Isabella Byrd, a super realistic American movie theatre where I got to play the part of projectionist with a real 35mm projector. We were only a small team of six, and it was a lovely, yet slightly dysfunctional, family to be part of.

Moving into the freelance world I've been lucky to be lead production electrician on shows for Lee Curran,

Lucy Carter and Jon Clark – all very different from each other: Lee's X-bars and parcans wedged into tiny gaps on *Summer and Smoke*, Lucy's hundreds (maybe a small exaggeration) of practicals on *Home, I'm Darling* and Jon's US/DS lighting bars on *Betrayal*. I've enjoyed these shows immensely but they are only as good as the team you have around you – thank you to those who kept me sane and joined me for a beer in the pub afterwards. I look forward to those times again. 🍷



Working on *Betrayal* at the Harold Pinter Theatre

Intro to lighting for camera

Jack Wills reports on the joint ALD/STLD meeting in July

Back in July I was fortunate to get in contact with John Piper from the Society of Television Lighting and Design (STLD) to answer some questions I had about lighting for camera. I have always had an interest in this area but found much less guidance online when compared to theatre.

After some emails, we opened it up to a live Zoom for ALD and STLD members. The session was packed full of details and case studies and will be shared online soon for catching up. The main guest speakers included Bernie Davis (three Royal TV awards and a Knight of Illumination award), Roger Simonsz (award-winning cinematographer and director of *Death In Paradise*), Roger Williams (*Naked Attraction* and *8 out of 10 Cats*) and Nigel Catmur (Knight of Illumination award winner and the *Graham Norton Show*).

The first topic was how they got into the industry. The older members of the STLD were simply thrown into large gigs, such as *BBC Proms*, for their first job role, and the younger members surprisingly trained in theatre first before taking smaller roles in studios and working their way up the ladder.

On the topic of how people get started, we recognised that many TV studios/film projects are unlikely to allow someone with

less experience to take the reins, unlike in theatre where there is an abundance of fringe/small productions that help young designers quickly gain experience and move up to bigger venues at a faster rate than those lighting for TV or camera.

We then moved onto our first case study: guest musician performances on the *Graham Norton Show*. This was the first bit of powerful lighting I noticed on TV, and I was particularly keen to find out the logistics behind it. Who better to advise than Nigel Catmur, who has been the lighting director for four episodes of *TGNS?* Nigel explained that the artist often brings a lighting designer who collaborates with the in-house lighting director to ensure the performance reflects both the artist and the show's style, while being practical and ensuring everyone on the set can be seen. For example, the backing singers are sometimes overlooked initially but they must be lit correctly as it is likely they will be used for a few shots in between the main guest. In terms of the schedule, they get half an hour to rehearse and an hour to shoot – much tighter than theatre scheduling but the benefits of LED lanterns and a fast programmer help to reduce the time needed.

Roger Simonsz, director of *Death in Paradise*, shared that sometimes they have spent two days getting a few seconds in the edit but at other times have had fifteen minutes of usable footage at the end of each day. This is sometimes achieved with two different teams to reduce setup time.

Another key thing theatre teaches those looking to light for camera is how to make a rig work throughout the production process. This is more difficult to learn on film sets because they often shoot out of order so they have to ensure their kit is flexible but also that the story of the lighting is clearly seen throughout. Unlike theatre, lighting for camera comes with an editor who can sometimes shift the order of scenes post-filming. This often changes the story of the lighting throughout. At least in theatre we can “lock down” the looks of the production once everyone is happy.

In short, we had some great industry names and some very detailed case studies discussed. I look forward to sharing the unedited recording and hope that if you found this interesting you will enjoy catching up on the 90-minute session. I would like to thank everyone at the STLD for helping to organise this session. 🍷

Howell Binkley (1956-2020)

Warren Letton remembers a great lighting designer and friend



I first met Howell in a coffee shop on Broadway in 2017. I had been asked by the UK producers if I'd be interested in being his UK associate when *Hamilton* came over to the West End. I happened to be in New York at the time and got in touch with Howell to arrange meeting up to see if he wanted me.

To say I was a touch nervous is an understatement. This man had just won his second Tony award for the hottest ticket show in town, and here was I putting my hat in the ring to look after it for him in London!

When I saw him sat in the coffee shop with a warm beaming smile across his face, my nerves settled a tiny bit.

Our conversation lasted no more than an hour. I think he'd sized me up in the first ten minutes, and even so, he asked me to come aboard and "join the family". He called it family, and this really is what it was. As anybody that worked with him knows, you became family. In comparison to many that worked with Howell across his vast array of shows, I was just a distant nephew, but as soon as anyone had any kind of connection with him, every time he saw you, it was like seeing a lifelong friend. The rest of the family were incredibly welcoming too: his long-term associate Ryan O'Gara and assistant Amanda Zieve were both so approachable and welcoming to a new stranger in the mix, and it made me feel right at home.

I heard about Howell's passing via social media, which isn't the most pleasant way of finding out about the loss of a friend and colleague. However, because of the situation our world is in at the moment, it was probably inevitable, and actually the experience was very moving. To see the endless stream of messages, stories, love and sadness, from all those people that he'd touched in his career, was incredible and humbling. It was clear that he made a lasting impact on a lot of people in his lifetime.

Many who knew Howell quickly found a personal "thing" that they'd share between them both, like the sound associate who Howell would wish a happy birthday to every day, because they'd gotten fed up that it was always someone else's birthday on productions and not theirs! With me, our moment came when we took a night off from a preview and went to see a musical that was playing at a theatre opposite to ours. I won't name the show, the city or the country we were in for fear of upsetting some people, but believe me, it was a truly awful production. When the houselights came up at the end of act 1, with my face still in astonishment at what we had just watched, I slowly turned to Howell, whose head slowly turned to mine. After a very long pause he finally said, "What did we do wrong?" We didn't stay for act 2. From that moment, the rest of our tech referred back to that show: "Is that a bit too 'X'?" or "Is that what they'd have done over the road?"

Howell would often pick up his preferred telephone style handset, while he watched me tidying up a moving light focus, and say, "You love your job, don't you, sir?" A master of his craft, he was known



Howell Binkley montage image created by Jason Thompson

Howell's funeral was held in Winston-Salem, and though only a few were able to travel to be there, a lot of people joined the live stream to remember him. Even there, he managed a perfect transition from a torrential downpour of rain at the start to streaming sunlight by the end. On the same day, Facebook was overwhelmed with profile pictures changed to a mosaic of his image layered among his favourite Internal Reflections gobo and background pictures of sunsets, to celebrate a

well loved man. Rosco has just announced a name change of R77760 from Internal Reflections to Binkley Reflections in a fitting and lasting tribute.

After *Hamilton*, I was honoured he asked me to be his programmer and UK associate on *Come from Away* in Dublin, London and Melbourne, and I was due to work with him again in the new year on another transfer, but sadly I won't get that opportunity now. I will continue to be his eyes in London for both productions and keep his magical work alive for everyone to experience.

On each of the times that I worked with Howell, he never really liked to say

goodbye. During *Hamilton*, I sent him a message one preview day to tell him what time the afternoon rehearsal was starting, and he replied telling me he was at the airport, and he was leaving it in my hands! The same thing happened on *Come from Away* both in Dublin and London, but in Melbourne I had my revenge by leaving the production before him and handing over to the local programmer. But actually it meant that I got to say goodbye that time and thank him, which was the last time I saw him in person.

Howell is survived by his wife Joyce Storey, his daughter Zoë King and his brother John Binkley, but also all of the "family" that he collected along the way. He will be sorely missed and incredibly fondly remembered by all who met him. 🌹

for "carving" with light. You could see he relished painting with light over the canvasses of floors and back walls on his productions, and the attention he gave to every cue and moment, and you knew that he too loved his job, even if he would always insist that "it's my first day".

I could write an awful lot about Howell's clear passion for theatre, his mentoring of student designers, the daily art he'd share on Facebook, his legacy of shows (52 on Broadway alone), the plethora of awards and nominations he achieved, the trademark looks within his work, but this article can't be that long.

Sleepless in Wembley Park

Ken Billington on working with Covid precautions

As I write this, I am flying back to my home in New York City having opened a new show, *Sleepless, a Musical Romance*, at the Troubadour Wembley Park Theatre. I know I am very lucky to have a job and to be lighting a big new West End musical. Yes, Wembley Park is a tube ride away from the traditional theatre district, but it has been classified “West End” because its shows are eligible for the London theatre awards.



I just wanted all the ALD folks to know that theatre is possible again. It's different and will probably be that way for a while, but there is every reason to hope that we will all be working again soon.

December 2, 2019: Producer Michael Rose contacted me about availability. Tim Lutkin

was supposed to be the lighting designer, but when the *Sleepless* dates moved to a March opening, *Sleepless* was no longer available, and the producer contacted me.

A catch: Troubadour Wembley Park Theatre is a television and motion picture sound stage. A short walk from the Wembley Park Underground Station, it has recently become a legitimate theatre. You can call it a theatre because there are 1,200 seats facing in one direction. The seats face the concrete floor of the studio and a back wall, with an open studio grid overhead. The only overhead obstruction is the track enclosure for the large soundproof doors that can separate stage 1 from stage 2.

I received the building plans and Morgan Large's scenic drawings. With no photos and no time for a recce, I had to figure out how to make this work. There were no lighting positions. Yes, there was a railing around the catwalks that circle the building, but they were not symmetrical. 289 meters of truss later I had lighting positions. There was, however, another challenge: a revolve with a two-storey house on it and no way to access the lights other than flying them in, and that would

work only if the revolve stopped in the right position. That meant all automated fixtures overhead. I drew a plot.

January 25, 2020: On my way back from lighting a concert in Istanbul, I stopped to do a recce for *Sleepless* and for *Sunday in the Park with George*, which was set to play at the Savoy and is now delayed. Working with production electrician Sam Floyd, I figured out that we needed to add more pipe and truss, and I made the necessary adjustments to the plot.

January 27, 2020: I met with Peter Marshall of PRG and Max Narula, who I hoped would be my associate. We faced budget problems; the truss alone devoured the budget of an entire lighting rig. To bring the price down to something reasonable, the Luster's became colour scrollers. Hey, five years ago, we loved colour scrollers. I adjusted to the PRG current inventory of movers: Viper Performance, PRG Icon Spots, PRG Best Boy Spots and Washes, ETC Revolutions, Clay Paky Scenius Profile, GLP X4 Bars and X4 Wash. It was like Supermarket Sweep, a TV show with contestants running down grocery aisles grabbing everything they could. Add in the 227 Source Fours (35

Parnels were need for house lights), EOS TI, dimmers, three Aramis followspots, and miles of multi cable. I had a show, and Peter negotiated what I thought was a good price from PRG. I should have included smelling salts to revive the producer.

I then looked for a programmer and an associate, when Max was not available. Remember that back in January everyone was working and finding someone for a show in March posed a problem. I was lucky. Phillip Rosenberg recommended Dale Driscoll, his associate on *Pretty Woman*, and programmer Victoria Brennan, who had been with the same show, was also available.

So far, everything remained normal for London. It was, however, a big lighting rig, and on March 1, we started the load-in. Everything still seemed standard, except for all the motors Unusual Rigging had to install. Then, of course, the stage had to be built after we had the truss in the air.

March 10: I arrived and started to focus.

March 17: With the cast onstage, we ran tech through the opening.

March 18: Pandemic. Producer Michael Rose stopped production. Everything stopped.

March 19: I flew back to New York on a BA flight, with 45 people on board, including crew.

March, April and May: We all did the same thing. Nothing. Or, at least, nothing that had anything to do with mounting a show. I soon had a very clean and

uncluttered house, but I worried about my friends and colleagues and about paying my office rent. We all worried.

June 24: I had an email from Michael Rose. Sleepless was back on. I applauded Michael's optimism, but I didn't know how it all would or could happen. Within a week, Michael came up with dates and a game plan.

July 19: I had to plan quarantine time before we started work at the theatre on August 10. I was still not quite convinced we could make it work. I did not immediately purchase a plane ticket, but they were cheap and plentiful, so I knew that if the show happened, getting a seat would be the easy part.

July 30: The show was on. It was going to happen. I got my ticket, and I flew to the UK, eager to work, but first I spent my two weeks of quarantine at the producer's home in Bournemouth.



First day back at work!

August 10: The crews arrived at the venue to check out the lighting, audio and winch systems, but there was a new procedure: Covid-19 testing. The producers located and hired the company that created the Franko Test, a Covid testing machine that produces results in less than an hour. This was the magic bullet allowed our show to happen. Everyone working on the production was tested every day and permitted in the theatre only if negative. We created a Covid-free bubble.



To accommodate testing nearly seventy people every day, we were each assigned a specific arrival time. The machines could only run 24 tests at a time, but this became the way we worked.

Sleepless in Wembley Park

Ken Billington

Step 1: You download the YOTI app.

Step 2: A nurse in full protective garb swabs either your nose or throat.

Step 3: You move to the tested side of the room and wait for results.

Step 4: Your results arrive after about an hour.

Step 5: If you are negative, you receive a coloured wristband and enter the theatre.

Step 6: Following building protocols, you still need to wear a mask. Actors are without masks on stage but masked in the wings.

Step 7: You are not allowed to leave the theatre property. If you do leave, you have broken the bubble and can't return until the following day when you are, of course, tested again.

Testing on the first day took four hours to get the crew into the theatre. On day two, it took two hours, and by day three, it took ninety minutes. Eventually, it took an hour. Like the rest of us, the testing folks learned from rehearsal.

Being in the bubble meant bringing your own lunch, dinner, snacks and drinks.

The theatre had one microwave, but PRG sent a refrigerator for the lighting team. Breaks were as usual, and the theatre had an outdoor courtyard, so on nice days we could eat outside.

Nobody complained. We are working and putting on a show.

August 12: Cast, crew, wardrobe gathered for our first rehearsal day. The BBC arrived with a camera crew (all tested)

Team Lighting: Dale Driscoll (associate), Victoria Brennan (programmer), Ken Billington (lighting designer), Tom Boucher (show electrician), Sam Floyd (senior production electrician), Lizzy Gunby (show electrician)



to document our return to work. The cast tried to remember what they did in March. I tried to remember what I had done for the previously written cues.

August 14: EPK shoot. The producers had to get something out to the world in the following week. The entire show had not yet been blocked, but wardrobe had the cast in full costume for the first time. I was lighting the video as we went. It was like working on a TV special, but Vic, Dale, and I made it look good on the fly.

August 18: We started full tech. I had never been so happy, and Team Lighting couldn't wait to start. The next six days were what you might expect with tech and dress rehearsals, but with the new protocols in place and necessary adjustments:

1. Wearing a mask with a headset is not much fun. I tried a face shield for about an hour. It was like looking through a

burned-out piece of Rosco 132 frost. I went back to the mask.

2. Covid-related restrictions required that each department stay in its own area. Lighting was located in the cross aisle, with three tables: designer, associate, and console. Only the electricians department was allowed to visit us. Video, sound, automation, and director: each worked in isolation. Gone were the days when the director could come up and sit next to me to talk about the lighting. We discussed the show on headsets or by shouting across four rows to pick up your headset.

3. For me, the biggest problem was not being allowed to go onstage when the cast was there. Sometimes I just need to see how light hits around obstacles, especially when the set is revolving. It became a matter of hunt and peck, hoping to get lucky.

4. Instead of the usual snacks at the tech table, we had an appetizing spread of hand sanitiser, wipes, spare facemasks, plastic gloves, and paper towels.

August 25: Previews began. Crews had deep cleaned the lobbies and the auditorium. The audience arrived. The seating diagram was a sea of Xs, indicating the unavailable spaces. Of the theatre's 1,200 seats, only 400 were available. Audience members were required to wear masks. Tickets were on phones or printed out at home. Each ticketholder was registered at the entrance for contact tracing. Temperatures were taken. The normal bag check was available, but large hand sanitiser stations were everywhere, and social distancing was enforced.

We are not allowed to mingle with the audience; that would have broken our bubble. A ladder took us to the last row of the theatre where lighting and sound were located, without bringing us into contact with the audience. The swings and production personnel had seats on the catwalk, house right. We could not have notes sessions after the show because that would risk possible virus transmission from the seats in the stalls. It was lovely



Not your typical production desk treats!

Sleepless in Wembley Park

Ken Billington

to leave at the end of the show and a long day, but with all the pubs and restaurants closed, everyone just went home.

September 1, 2020: Opening night! It was a typical first night, with press cameras and a step and repeat photo area, the usual celebrities, and sixty critics. I suddenly remembered that the critics had also been out of work. They were as thrilled to be back as we were.

Opening *Sleepless, a Musical Romance* was a life-affirming event. We got to do what we love doing, even if we had to find some different ways of doing it. My hat is off to the producers. They did something everyone said could not be done, and they kept us, and the audience, safe every step of the way. 🌸

Sleepless, a Musical Romance
Director: Morgan Young
Set designer: Morgan Large
Costume designer: Sue Simmerling
Video designer: Ian William Galloway
Lighting designer: Ken Billington
Associate lighting designer: Dale Driscoll
Lighting programmer: Victoria Brennan



Socially distanced audiences



Lighting for Zoom

Iain Devereux lights his local church and his own home office



Like so many others on 23 March, I gazed into the future and wondered when I would next be inside

a venue. I didn't expect it to be just two weeks later.

As soon as the government announced restrictions, my local church started streaming their services simultaneously on YouTube and Zoom. A live presentation at the church building by the minister was interspersed with video, audio and PowerPoint inserts and pre-recorded interactions on Zoom. Everything was working very smoothly apart from the lighting. The house rig, which I had supplied and installed a few years ago, was quite satisfactory to illuminate the platform area and musicians for a Sunday congregation, but it was totally inadequate for the demands of video broadcast, in brightness, colour temperature and focus. Could I help? Delighted!

In the early days of lockdown, the streets of Edinburgh were eerily empty and had the kind of deserted feel I associate with one of John Wyndham's apocalyptic novels. It felt very odd driving again after a break, and even stranger travelling on empty roads. I expected at any moment to be stopped by the police and asked what my business was. Normally, unloading would have been tricky, but I was able to park directly outside the church as I discovered the Council had temporarily done away with all parking restrictions and charges.

The inside of the church building seemed strange. Rows of chairs had been replaced with production desks and the floor was covered with stands, video displays, monitor speakers and cables. Each desk was socially distanced, which added to the technical spread across the floor space. The overhead trussing (a fixed feature in this building) enhanced the TV studio appearance.

Lighting for broadcast isn't my area. I haven't done any lighting for video for a very long time. Okay, I'll be honest. It was 1988. Back then it was all Redheads, Blondes, and their Arri equivalents springing off autopoles. At that time the 16 amp 240v plugs on this equipment were fairly unknown in theatre, where plugs like the 20 amp Hubbell were still around for loads just above 15 amp (complete with their metal casings...). I own no TV lighting equipment, and on this occasion banks



Lighting for Zoom

Iain Devereux

of Par64s, some PCs and a pile of colour correction filters had to suffice. I used an upturned Selecon Aurora positioned on the floor to light the beautiful wooden panelling at the back of the platform. Backlight, mounted on stands, needed no creative positioning: it could happily

drive into the eyes of the front row ... as there would be no one to complain. It was an unusual (and wonderful) experience having as much time as I wanted to get things right. There was also no danger of being asked to pause to accommodate someone else's access to the stage. There

was just one other person in the building (to ensure my health and safety). The only disadvantage was that I wouldn't find out how it would look on screen until Sunday morning.

The lighting did make a big difference. The minister was sharply defined and

the carved wooden panelling looked lovely; however, the definition was now so much better, every detail showed. I was irritated by some protruding nails that I now noticed at the top of the panelling. I guess someone must have knocked them in at some point to support a cable run.

As lockdown continued, and we all got used to using Zoom, I enjoyed observing the effect of natural and man-made sources on people's faces as I had in online meetings. It was fun working out where they were sitting relative to windows, desk lamps and light fittings. This led to my second project which was a



Screenshot of early webcast using uncorrected tungsten profiles



Screenshot of webcast afterwards

personal one. My PC faces the wall, and I sit with my back to the window. I realised that the result of this arrangement was a rather macabre shadowy silhouette when I appeared on Zoom. Hardly a good advert for a lighting designer! Again, I had to make do with what was available to me at home. I have a good number of old (and very old) lanterns stashed away that I never use but don't like to part with.

And so out of the store came a set of wee spotlights that I guess few designers today will have encountered. The Strand Pattern 103 was designed to highlight items in shop windows. It's a small 50-watt Fresnel secured to a post, allowing it to

hang from the top of a shop-front window or be easily angled as a footlight. It even has a sliding focus mechanism. Once I had positioned these around the room they gave great sculpting, with just a touch of fill light required from a domestic desk lamp. I've always found that Pulsar, because of its specialised disco/club remit, provides good dimming at very low wattages. To my wife's horror I lugged a Pulsar rack, cabling and a six-channel control upstairs. Now I could obsessively adjust the intensity of each source to compensate for the changing light conditions through the window. It's still in use at the time of writing, the lanterns

providing good service some 50 years after they were made, and I have complete confidence that they can remain in my office as long as they're needed; I know none of my clients is ever likely to want them! 🍷



Lighting Zoom sessions: the Pattern 103 comes out of retirement

Covid contract conundrum

Joe Price faces a dilemma...

Every one of our members has presumably felt some level of hardship during the coronavirus pandemic. Clearly, it is an event that will affect us all for years to come. In early March I watched as all of my projects for the coming months were postponed or cancelled and, before I knew it, I was claiming benefits, when only weeks before I had been finalising representation agreements with an agency.

By early April I was, like so many of my peers, working for a supermarket (see photo alongside theatre designer and fellow employee Bex Wood). I was immensely grateful for this vital source of income, especially as the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme had not yet been announced, but the 6am starts and endless heaving of heavy shopping around high-rise flats soon began to grate.

As the months wore on and our industry showed limited signs of recovery, I began to question my entire future, whether lighting design was a viable career path, or if I should consider other options, retrain, and leave theatre behind. I considered trying to pursue my DJing hobby as a professional outlet or investigating how I could incorporate my passion for beer

into a fulfilling job. I applied for several administrative roles and even a position with the Bristol Wood Recycling Project! None of these avenues proved fruitful.

It felt like my luck was changing in September. First came a job in a board game café, followed by an offer to take on some teaching at a local college. Then, like the London buses, came three theatre projects all at once, though of course very much under the "Covid-19 TBC" disclaimer. Two of these were productions that had been postponed and, as such, already had their budgets and funding plans in place, meaning the fees and other contractual elements would remain largely unaltered.

The other was a Christmas show at a venue with whom I had been in discussions since February, but no confirmed collaborations were in place.

During our initial conversations I discovered that the venue used a Vista Chroma-Q control system and was keen to work with designers who were willing to use this setup. I was not particularly familiar with the software and so, as lockdown descended, the theatre kindly hired out an additional desk for me to take home and practice on. This certainly

helped while away some hours in between delivery driver shifts! Good communication was maintained throughout as the venue began to explore options for socially distanced performances, first with an outdoor season over the summer and, more recently, an autumn programme of work back on the main stage. As a result, I was confident an opportunity to work together would soon present itself.

So, when the Christmas show was brought up, I was eager to hear more. A phone call with the producer revealed that, due to the need for a socially distanced audience, they would be working on a significantly reduced budget. Despite this, they were still asking me to commit to an eight-day tech and preview period, and for this they were offering just £500. Allowing for a minimum of two days working from home preparing paperwork, it would work out as perhaps a £50 day rate at best.

Obviously, this was not welcome, nor expected, news. I informed them that my usual day rate was a minimum of £150 but that, under the circumstances, I would be happy to reduce this to £100 if we could work out a five-day commitment from me for the tech (work from home could be in-



kind). Alternatively, I suggested that if they could boost the fee to £750 then I would feel more comfortable accepting the rest of the terms. Unfortunately, they were unable to negotiate in any way. Take it or leave it.

I chose to consider my options before giving confirmation either way. I was of course keen for any chance to get back to doing the job that I love, and appreciated that success in the project would potentially lead to future collaborations. However, I wanted to stand up for myself and the rights of all freelance staff and ensure that our already precarious position is not threatened further as a result of the current crisis. Seeking advice from others seemed a wise move, so I wrote a post on the ALD Members Facebook page

pointed out that this was an unacceptable fee, equivalent to less than minimum wage based on an average production schedule, and that accepting such offers could set a dangerous precedent. In contrast, there were responses suggesting that if I could afford to do the job then perhaps I should, as there would be a long queue of other willing candidates if I chose not to. They highlighted that it might be an investment for the future if it paved the way for further work down the line, and that I could use the lower fee on this occasion to push for increases next time around.

After much consideration, I decided to take the job primarily because, as I mentioned, I was in conversation with the venue for a long time and had spent time

and also emailed the ALD Executive group. Some of you may have seen the post and responses, which were extremely varied, covering the full spectrum of opinions on the matter. Many people quite rightly

during lockdown teaching myself the Vista Chroma-Q system, so this felt like a good opportunity to solidify the relationship, while also finally getting to design a show again, at long last. Following some excellent advice, I negotiated a clause in the contract stating that this was a one-off fee based on the current climate and it was not setting a precedent for future projects. The producers are covering all my expenses, and there is a Covid-19 cancellation clause as well, meaning I will get paid for any work done up to the point of cancellation.

Of course, if any future fees continue to fall below minimum expectations, then I shall politely decline and take the necessary action with the unions. For now, though, we are in uncharted territory and I am willing to give them the benefit of the doubt, and instead look forward to finally diving in to a creative and collaborative process once more. I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to everyone who contributed to the discussion and encourage all our members to continue to share experiences and support each other as we navigate these most turbulent of times. 🍷



Office Oracle

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

AAPTLE statement

The following statement was released on 7 October by the recently formed Alliance of Associations and Professionals in Theatre and Live Events (AAPTLE).

While we acknowledge and understand that many members will want to return to work as soon as possible, we would like to point out that there are still minimum terms and conditions to be met whether the contracts are underpinned by a union agreement or not.

If you are in any doubt about the work being offered you should contact your relevant union and the ALD so that we can understand the landscape of fees and conditions being created in response to the ongoing pandemic.

DON'T MAKE THE WORKFORCE PAY FOR THE RECOVERY OF THE THEATRE AND LIVE EVENTS INDUSTRIES

As our industry slowly returns to work, AAPTLE members are eager to make theatre again and to collaborate with our fellow artists and theatre workers. For many of us, any offer of work will be the first income we have received since March 2020. As much as we want to return to work, we call on producers to uphold, at a minimum, pre-COVID rates so that all workers and freelancers can be protected from being asked to pay for the recovery of the industry.

We also urge producers to acknowledge that the work required from every member of the production team is likely to take longer under the COVID-19 back-to-work guidance. When budgetary cuts are necessary these should sit in physical costs. They should not be made in peoples' fees. Prior to 2020, fees and conditions were at an unsustainably low level for many within the freelance community.

It is vital for theatre's ecology that our industry can be a beacon of inclusivity, access, diversity, sustainability and socioeconomic representation.

Fees need to make it possible for makers of all backgrounds and characteristics to afford to make the work. To ensure our progress, rates need to be upheld to support the removal of barriers and open up our sector to create opportunities to all regardless of ethnicity, gender, class, disability, caring responsibilities, sexual orientation and to those who are underrepresented: addressing the existing inequalities that were present pre COVID-19 and that now risk becoming even greater.

We acknowledge that some temporary terms have already been agreed. If, beyond the terms of the temporary agreements, members are offered lower rates of pay or reduced conditions, regardless of whether the job is accepted, we are advising our members to contact their professional bodies and their unions or representatives. These contracts should state that any reduced rates will be explicitly temporary and non-precedential.

Let's work together to share best practice and create vibrant, inclusive, accessible and representative theatre and live entertainment of which we can all be proud.

ALD Sponsored Student Scheme

The ALD is delighted to announce that the 2021 Sponsored Student Scheme is now open for applications. The scheme is funded by Corporate members of the ALD.

The scheme offers students who have not previously been members of the ALD the opportunity to enjoy free ALD membership until the end of March 2022. To qualify, applicants will not have previously been a member of the ALD and will be studying full time on a UK course or recognised industry apprenticeship scheme and have an interest in the process of live performance lighting and/or video and projection.

Student members benefit from the increased opportunity to network with lighting and video production professionals at insightful events organised by the ALD, such as their members' socials and visits to shows and theatres. Membership provides vital connection between established figures in professional lighting and video design, and the next generation of talented designers, programmers and technicians.

Member benefits for students include complimentary copies of the ALD magazine, *Focus*, as well as full access to the ALD website and access to set up your own microsite. Members also receive a 25% discount on the premium subscription fee for Mandy.com.

Jack Wills, of the ALD student working group, explains, "ALD student membership gives an excellent introduction to those entering or considering a career in

the lighting and video areas of the live performance arts. It allows you to plug directly into a network and, through the experiences and literature offered by the Association, exposes the breadth of jobs and career paths available within the UK and around the world."

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 student status attached to it will be processed for the scheme.

The closing date for applications is Christmas 2020, but the earlier you submit your application, the longer your FREE membership will run for. All memberships run until the end of March 2022 at which point you need to inform us if you wish to continue your membership in the normal student category (£36 per year).

Those members currently on the scheme have received further information about their status via an email bulletin.

ALD online meetings

The current situation has meant having to rework our usual list of venue or show visits as members' meetings in the next couple of weeks, but we have created a hub page on the members' side of the website which contains the latest list of confirmed events: www.ald.org.uk/meetings.

We are aiming to hold events on a monthly basis where it is in our control to

do so – so keep the last Thursday of each month free if you are interested.

With events being set up at short notice, our email bulletins remain the best way to ensure you receive all the information you may need at the current time.

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

Do we have your correct contact details?!

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. If you have not received a printed copy recently, please contact us to check whether you have been taken off the list...

Please ensure that you update your information on the website directly via the "Contact Details & Preferences" 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.

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. 📧

Diary dates 2020–2021

26 November	Members' meeting: <i>Emilia</i> Zoe Spurr in conversation with Charlotte Burton
11–12 May 2021	PLASA Focus Leeds*
9–10 June 2021	ABTT Theatre Show
22–25 May 2021	Showlight, Fontainebleau, France
5–15 August 2021	World Stage Design, Calgary, Canada
5–7 September 2021	PLASA show, Olympia, London*

Keep up to date with ALD events via the online diary: www.ald.org.uk/diary. Keep up to date with members' meetings information at www.ald.org.uk/meetings.

* The ALD will have a presence at these events.

Showlight 2021 call for papers

The essence of Showlight is its speakers, and we are now calling for anyone involved in lighting – be they lighting designers, lighting directors, directors of photography, architectural lighting designers or in associated roles such as programmers and manufacturers – to submit their ideas for 2021's conference papers in Fontainebleau. Talks are to be twenty minutes in length to enable as many papers as possible to be presented over the three-day period. If you would like to become part of Showlight 2021 by presenting a paper, please email papers@showlight.org with the following information:

Name(s)

Company

Mobile number

Email address

A brief summary of the paper you are proposing

We look forward to receiving your exciting ideas!

Contact us

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Redoubt House, Edward Road, Eastbourne BN23 8AS
www.ald.org.uk office@ald.org.uk
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Editor: Kelli Zezulka editor@ald.org.uk

Editorial team: James Laws, Rob Halliday and Sofia Alexiadou

To submit ideas for articles, correspondence, corrections and any comments about *Focus*, email editor@ald.org.uk. Owing to space restrictions, we do not accept press releases for publication in *Focus*. However, company members may send press releases to the ALD office (office@ald.org.uk) to be posted on the ALD website. Company members only may advertise in *Focus*; please contact the office for details. Editorial guidelines for authors are available on request. *The opinions published within Focus are not necessarily those of the ALD. E&OE. Content deadline for the next issue: 15 November 2020*

Professional members' shows

opening in October and November

October

1 October Kieron Johnson *Head Above Water* Dance East, Ipswich

1 October Kieron Johnson *Khepri* Dance East, Ipswich

1 October Jamie Platt *The Last Five Years* Southwark Playhouse (Large)

2 October Jason Addison *Connecting Voices: Orpheus in the Record Shop* Leeds Playhouse Quarry Theatre

2 October Edmund Sutton *Savage Beauty* 25, St Luke's Road, Brighton

18 October Chuma Emembolu *L'enfant Prodigue* Greenwich Theatre

18 October Chuma Emembolu *Poison, Passion and Purification* Greenwich Theatre

24 October Palle Palme *The Little Mermaid* The Globe, Stockholm

30 October Johanna Town *15 Heroines* Jermyn Street Theatre

November

7 November Malcolm Rippeth *Madama Butterfly* Oper Graz

17 November Jamie Platt *Dick Whittington* Above The Stag Theatre

18 November Mark Jonathan *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Royal Academy of Music

21 November Joe Price *Peter Pan* Barn Theatre, Cirencester

25 November John Rainsforth *Rapunzel* The Customs House

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.

Tales from the Elephant's Trunk

Sam Morley makes some "Zoom theatre"

Like everyone I know in the industry my summer suddenly became extremely free and so when Django Pinter (a director I have worked with in the past) asked if I wanted to work on a virtual show with him, I practically bit his hand off to say yes.

The project had a few key requirements: the actors should require no hardware apart from a laptop with an internet connection, it should feel more magic than a normal Zoom call, it should be a very live experience for the audience, it

shouldn't be too expensive to create, and most importantly it should work. In normal times I am a student/ lighting designer and crew member; therefore, quite a lot of my time early on in the project was spent learning how to do video and use media servers. On account of budget we couldn't afford more conventional video switching hardware which narrowed down our options to network-based video. After a bit of searching we used Zoom for the video conferencing as it has lots of options

for pinning participants and messaging people which was great for interacting with the audience. Screen grabbing was all done via NDI which could shuttle HD video across our network without even breaking into a sweat. We used Isadora as our media server/live effects engine as it had everything we needed in one very good value package.

The show was devised by our lovely (and very patient) actors (Catty Tucker, Charlie Folorunsho, Corinne Micallef, Isobel Wood and Mikhail Sen) over a few hours of rehearsals. The plot revolved around people telling stories to other members of a block of flats out of their windows. The fact that it was a Zoom play made it very specific to lockdown and so we didn't want to shy away from lockdown in the story. Headshots of actors were placed over beautiful backgrounds drawn by Django. The headshots could be moved about over the backgrounds, and while it wasn't realistic it worked to convey the story with a bit of suspension of disbelief.

The audience were all on their own Zoom call, which enabled us to chat with them before the show started and allowed us to make the show interactive. The Zoom













annotation tools enabled them to colour in one of the sets and we could also recruit audience volunteers to play a few of the characters that featured in the stories. My main job during the show was messaging lines to and pinning the volunteers. While relying on audience members was slightly terrifying, it made the experience feel very live and the volunteers absolutely loved seeing themselves on the video feed. Overall feedback for the show was very positive and people said that somehow it felt alive and communal while being completely distanced. It was a great little project and I think we have only scratched the surface of what is possible with “Zoom theatre”. 🌸









Tales from the Elephant's Trunk
Four More Walls (www.djangopinter.com/fourmorewalls)
Director: Django Pinter
Actors: Catty Tucker, Charlie Folorunsho, Corinne Micallef,
Isobel Wood, Mikhail Sen
Technical stuff: Sam Morley

Corporate members

<p>AC Entertainment Technologies 01494 446000 www.ac-et.com</p> 	<p>Christie Lites 02476 017270 www.christielites.com</p> 	<p>Elation Professional +31 45 546 85 66 www.elationlighting.eu</p> 	<p>Hawthorn 01664 821111 www.hawthorn.biz</p> 	<p>Robe UK Ltd 01604 741000 www.robeuk.com</p> 
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Thank you for your support! For Commercial members, see the back cover.

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<p>Vari-Lite Strand +31 534500424 www.philips.com/entertainmentlighting</p> 	
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For the next issue...

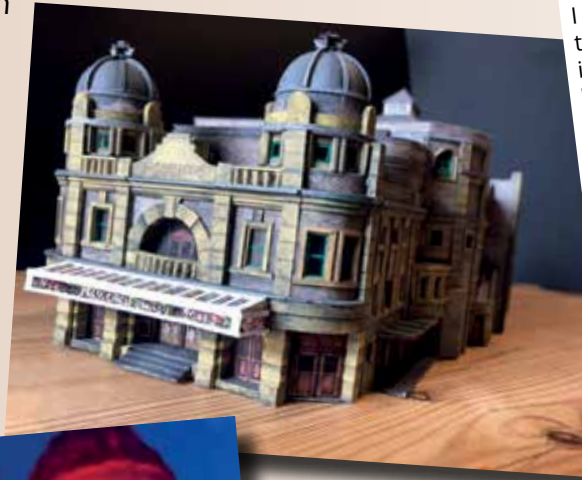
We want your contributions! Designers, technicians, programmers, in-house, freelance, amateur – all welcome!

- *Send us a **postcard** from anywhere in the world! 100 words maximum, plus 2–3 images.*
- *Tell us about your **favourite production**. It can be something you worked on or something you saw. 150 words maximum, plus 1–2 images.*
- *Let us know what you've been up to **during lockdown**. Have you been learning a new skill, working on a production (live or virtual) or doing something else exciting? 200 words maximum, plus 1–2 images.*
- *Keep updating your **show listings**. We want to know what you are working on and where.*

Send all contributions to editor@ald.org.uk before 15 November. We'll publish as many as we can in the December/January issue. 📧

Lockdown postcard

Pete Watts, Buxton



During lockdown, I've been making scale models! It was a hobby before all this happened, but I never had time. It was nice to find myself with time to make some kits. Then on our daily walk in Buxton back in April, my partner, Rachel, said, "Why don't you build the opera house?"

So I did... It took a month, and I made it up as I went along. It was going to just be the frontage, but I got carried away and built all of it! We lit the real Buxton Opera House in red for the Light it in Red night, so I took the model along and lit it red too... I've now started a small business selling models for something to get me through the cancelled autumn and panto season!

I've attached a few pics of the opera house. There are tons of pics of the other stuff I've been making on my website, www.buxleymodels.com, but I thought the opera house is the one with the link to the industry! 🍷



New members

Welcome!

Professional members

Mig Burgess, East Molesey

Dale Driscoll, London

Ahmed Elkholy, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Simon Grant, Suffolk

Adam Killey, North Petherton

Rachel Sampley, London

Caleb W Stroman, Selinsgrove, USA

Affiliate members

Corrie Harris, London

Harry Owen, Dumfries and Galloway

Joshua Harriette, London

Associate members

Matt Barrow, Somerset

Sponsored Student members

Jessica Brigham, Liverpool

Harrison Brown, Leeds

Joseph Bryant, London

Amy Camp, Derbyshire

Ros Chase, London

Sophia Dreyer, London

Ian Frampton, Bristol

Krzysztof J Gantner, Lomianki, Poland

Ben Garcia, London

Lewis Harper, Liverpool

Edward Jackson, London

Jamie Moran, Oxton

Jonathan D Reeks, Westhill

Lewis Rimmer, Cheshire

Daniel Robinson, London

Molly Stammers, Eastbourne

Postcard from Tokyo home

Rick Fisher and Rob Halliday light remotely

The revival of the Japanese production of *Billy Elliot the Musical* was due to start fitting up in early June, with an opening night of July 18. The normal run of musicals in Japan is very short by UK standards: three months maximum and often shorter. If the show is successful, they will reassemble the same cast, as much as possible, to recreate the show after a few years for another short run.

This illustrates how adept and usual it is for Japanese teams to recreate shows. Rob Halliday and I spent a month in Tokyo for

the first production in 2017. We were both looking forward to rejoining the show in Tokyo this summer.

We had tickets and accommodation booked, and adaptations to the rig had been agreed (equipment from the original production is sadly harder to find and maintain, while other units have better options than were available in 2005!). However, the pandemic put everything on hold.

The original travel dates came and went, rules kept changing in the UK and Japan, and it soon became clear that the international team would never be able to get to Tokyo. Our associate director and choreographer rehearsed the company via Zoom from London and Sydney, respectively – no small feat!

We agreed a way of supporting the team remotely, answering as many questions

as we could, and, crucially, Rob setting up a trial studio at White Light so he could programme and match in the new units that we were using. This proved invaluable.

Yuta Watanabe, our previous Japanese programmer, was now the local associate LD. He and his team relied on the Focus Track file from 2017, supplemented with a new show file supplied by Rob after time in the studio. We gave him as much support and encouragement to then use his discretion to blend the new lights into the design and make it look like Billy.

Billy techs forever! Multiple casts of children have to have their own full tech, and most of the leading adult roles are double cast as well, so endless combinations have to be rehearsed. The upside of this is that there is plenty of lighting time!

The company set up a full-stage shot of the stage and sent us daily links to be able to watch what was happening (remember there's an eight-hour time difference).

Rob and I committed to watching a full dress rehearsal and two previews "live", after which we could give notes. In the end we watched much more, including individual scenes, and many act runs. It was surprising how much we could see.



From my point of view a lot of the cue timings seemed odd. I put this down to the camera not adjusting to the light level changes as well as the human eye. We were reassured by the team that they were closely monitoring this and making tweaks as needed.

An upside of this remote working is that we could pause the rehearsal video and rejoin it, allowing very small detailed notes to be given, often with a screen shot to illustrate the note. Something that might continue to be used in future!

Another upside was that the Japanese crew often remarked that they felt more involved and more connected to the show because they were fully responsible; it all became more special for them. We could see the care they were taking, which was very moving.

The downside was that it just was not as much fun as I know we would have had re-making the show. We missed the collaboration, amazing Japanese meals and particularly the long sessions in the after-hours "office", where we celebrated the special bond lighting people have all over the world.

Through the remarkable perseverance of the producers, performers and crew,

Billy opened for a curtailed one-month run in Tokyo and will move to Osaka for three weeks. The audience is reduced to 50% for social distancing regulations, but they seem to be as appreciative as ever.

Rob and I treated the team to some drinks and snacks and we Zoomed in for that, of course along with our essential and brilliant interpreter Sonoko Ishii – and while it was fun we still wish we were there! 🍷

*Billy Elliot the Musical
Japanese production*

Producers: Working Title, HoriPro

International executive producer: Louise Withers

Associate director: Simon Pollard

Associate choreographer: Tom Hodgson

Set designer: Ian MacNeil

Associate designer: Edward Pierce

Costume designer: Nicky Gillibrand

Lighting designer: Rick Fisher

Associate lighting designer: Rob Halliday

Associate lighting designer (Japan): Yuta Watanabe

Sound designer: Paul Arditti

Associate sound designer: Chris Reid



Lumière 20:20

This year's scheme, by [Charlotte Burton](#)

It is safe to say that Lumière 20:20 did not go as planned – in the best possible way! Originally, we wanted to pair 20 emerging lighting designers with 20 experienced practitioners for a ten-week mentoring scheme. We were able to offer micro-bursaries for each person involved due to a generous donation from the Mick Hughes Memorial Fund.

What happened next, we did not expect. We received another very generous donation. Then some people participating in the scheme kindly started to waive their bursaries. This allowed us to open the scheme up to even more people.

As we were going through the applications, we were taken aback by the standard of people that applied. Nearly all of the applicants were qualified and deserving of a place. Some tough decisions lay ahead of us. However, with the industry in its current position and the pandemic having affected the work of everyone who had applied, it did not seem right to turn people away at this time. In the end the only people that we didn't include in the scheme this year were those that were still in education, or who needed a different kind of support to that which we were providing in the scheme.

For those who were not paired with designers, we created a bespoke course called Team Lumière to complete together as a group. Rory Beaton came on board as the course leader and put together a brilliant programme of talks so the group could hear from a variety of designers speak on a range of topics. The course was supported by Stuart Porter and his presence and input have been invaluable.

Our initial thought was that this year's different approach to Lumiere would allow us to help more people than we normally would. Fast forward two months and we have started the course with 38 Lumieres, 35 mentors and 21 in Team Lumiere with people taking part from Scotland, England, Wales, Northern Ireland, Italy, Poland, Malaysia, Australia and the US. It was a very special moment to see them all on our opening session calls.

We cannot thank all of those involved enough for their time, effort and enthusiasm. We also give special mention to our working group and the Exec for supporting the scheme every step of the way. It is incredible that our lighting community wants to help and encourage emerging designers in this way, at this time.

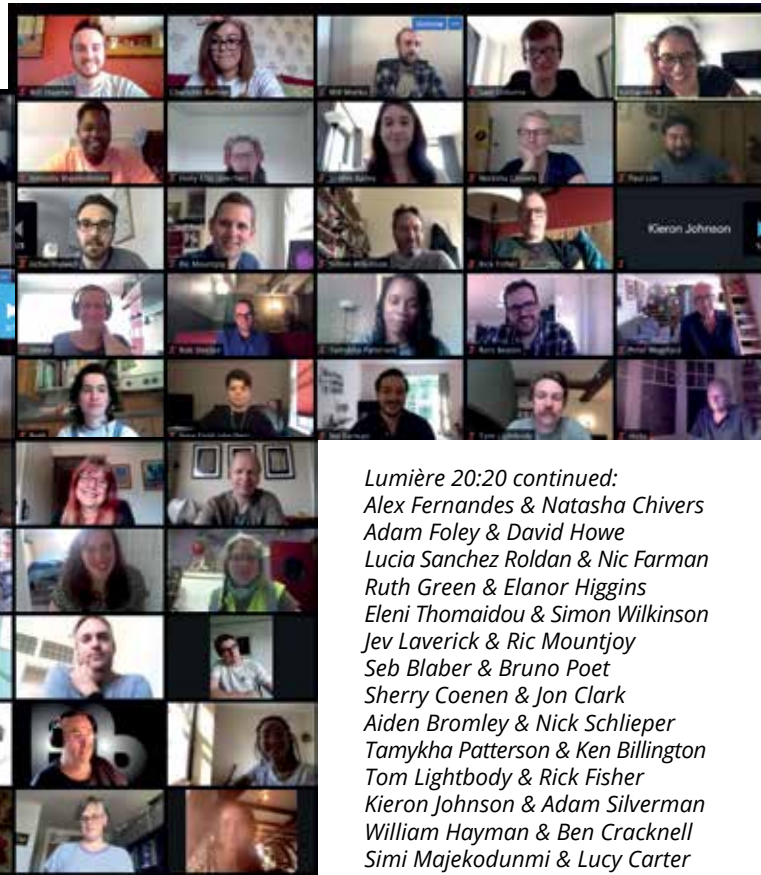
One of the most important things to take away as this awesome bunch starts the course is this: the people are out there – the assistants, associates and designers of the future exist and have the skills. What they need is the opportunity to develop and learn. We are so happy that we have been able to give so many of them this opportunity in 2020.

Lumière 20:20 are:

*Sophie Bailey & Richard Howell
Gianni Bertolli & Mark Jonathan
Adam Archer & Mike Robertson
Michael Brenkley & Daniella Beattie
Adam Murdoch & Rob Sinclair
Fee Dalgleish & Lee Curran
Holly Ellis & Aideen Malone
Hazuki Mogan & Jessica Hung Han Yun
Cara Hood & Matt Haskins
Catja Hamilton & Declan Randall
Charlotte McAdam & Charlie Morgan Jones
Sam Osbourne & Sherry Coenen
Euan Davis & Malcolm Rippeth
Fadzil Hanafi & Paul Lim
Alan Mooney & Charles Balfour
Hannah Walker & Zoe Spurr
Max Colbran & Jason Addison
Callum Macdonald & Mark Jonathan
Jane Lalljee & Lucy Carter
Nina Field & Kathy Perkins
Jen Roxburgh & Mike Le Fevre
Jess Addinall & Howard Hudson
Will Monks & Lizzie Powell
Krzysztof Gantner & Bruno Poet*



Team Lumière are:
 Bethany Gupwell, Dan Heesem, Iain Young, Joseph Ed Thomas, Lauren Flynn, Lewis Hannaby, Lucy Adams, Matt Whale, Nathan Storm, Noah Jones, Zoe Beeny, Matthew Lofting, Amy Cadwallader, Jack Wills, Jon Stacey, Tom Boase, Sam Ohlsson, Layla Bradbeer, Ethan Kent and Fred Rayment 🍷



Lumière 20:20 continued:
 Alex Fernandes & Natasha Chivers
 Adam Foley & David Howe
 Lucia Sanchez Roldan & Nic Farman
 Ruth Green & Elanor Higgins
 Eleni Thomaidou & Simon Wilkinson
 Jev Laverick & Ric Mountjoy
 Seb Blaber & Bruno Poet
 Sherry Coenen & Jon Clark
 Aiden Bromley & Nick Schlieper
 Tamykha Patterson & Ken Billington
 Tom Lightbody & Rick Fisher
 Kieron Johnson & Adam Silverman
 William Hayman & Ben Cracknell
 Simi Majekodunmi & Lucy Carter

The Last Five Years

Andrew Exeter at the Minack Theatre

How do you design a production in the middle of a pandemic? This was my immediate question when producers David, Chris and Ben asked me to join the creative team as set and lighting designer for their new outdoor revival of *The Last Five Years*, with plans to stage it at the world-famous Minack Theatre in Cornwall. *The Last Five Years* is a clear fit for social distancing, being a story with two performers that follows the five-year relationship of Cathy and Jamie, starting on a first date and ending in divorce. It is a musical unique for presenting Jamie's timeline chronologically, but intertwined with Cathy's timeline being played backwards. From the off, director Omar F Okai was interested by the contrast we could offer up visually to enhance the inner conflict in the story. The set design, therefore, consisted of a large floor piece: a double notepad that read "Cathy, The Last Five Years. Goodbye, Jamie" in bright yellow to contrast the vast blue ocean behind it. The stark yellow colour blocking and contemporary furniture also helped to juxtapose what was Minack's space and what was our characters' space. The set included two practice lamps, which helped to enhance the dual shift from Cathy to

Jamie's time zones in lighting, as well as a costume design that took cold-toned clothes into deeper blues as the stories moved forwards (or backwards) at opposing rates to provide a subtle visual indicator of time moving forward in each time zone. Through lighting, the space fell into deep yellows and deep greys depending on timelines and these also desaturated over time. With the show starting at 7pm, it became clear that across the 90-minute performance I would ultimately have to balance this storytelling and concept with

the influence of an extraordinary sunset. Coming to terms with not being able to control the intensity of the sun was a crucial turning point that, through embracing and accepting, ultimately led to an appreciation of what the Minack had to offer before we applied electric lighting and set pieces.

The best piece of advice I got in prep for this production was to trust the technical team at the Minack. Due to the unique nature of the Minack's space, and having never visited before the get-in, it was important to trust the in-house team



Cathy: Emma Kingston
Jamie: Waylon Jacobs

Andrew Exeter is a set and lighting designer based in London and a recent graduate of Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance. Andrew is a 2020 Stage Debut Award nominee for his lighting design on *High Fidelity* at the Turbine Theatre last autumn. @AndrewExeter

led by Simon Hutchings, who together have a collective knowledge of successful application of lighting for the Minack. Their in-house rig allows for three primary positions for lighting: one far left of the stage at a 20m distance; another straight ahead from the stage at an 11m distance and the final adjacent stage right, which acts as a strong rear sidelight, all made up of a range of PCs and LED outdoor pars. With all these distances of space in mind, and budget close to the wire, when putting together the spec for the show it became a good opportunity to exercise the “less is more” mantra. We focused on heightening what Simon’s team was already successfully achieving by adding a few narrow 5 degree Source Fours to the stage left position to punch in some extra face light and used the power and colour of some SGMs Q7 floods to sculpt the faces of the Minack’s stone architecture. Storm Lighting supplied kit for this production, all of which had to be IP rated for rain protection. They were great at realising what we were trying to achieve and offered up the addition of twenty SmartBat uplighters to help sculpt the rest of the Minack’s auditorium. Their battery charging and wireless DMX feature really helped



with speeding up the set-up time each day as well as opening design possibilities. Being able to sculpt light not only up the main stage rock faces but also all the way across the hand carved auditorium was a great feature and incredibly effective at heightening the intimacy of the space as the sun set.

Among a lot of things, for me and the design team on *The Last Five Years*, the biggest learning curve of creating during a pandemic has been an exciting reminder that theatre doesn’t just exist within dark rooms and proscenium arches. I’ve certainly realised that, in reality, some of the richest moments of lighting design can lie in

discovering what natural spaces, like the Minack, have to offer creatively for storytelling. If it wasn’t for the pandemic, I’m unsure whether I would have ever visited the Minack, let alone had the opportunity to challenge my own practice as a designer with what this totally unique space can offer. 🍀

The Last Five Years
Minack Theatre
Director: Omar F Okai
Set and lighting designer: Andrew Exeter
Associate designer: Natalia Alvarez
Production electrician: Nick Steer
Lighting supplier: Storm Lighting
Musical director: Leo Munby
Sound designer: Oscar Contran
Assistant director: Rebecca Wicking
Photography: Kyle Richardson

Orpheus in the Record Shop

Jason Addison returns to Leeds



I'm up from Leeds where I've been working at the recently refurbished Leeds Playhouse (formally West Yorkshire Playhouse). I have been lighting *Orpheus in the Record Shop* in the Quarry Theatre. This was one of the shows that was part of the Connecting Voices Festival, which has reopened the Playhouse in these difficult times. The festival includes six new and existing pieces of live performance staged safely in four areas of the Playhouse, played over three weekends in October, and fusing classic and contemporary theatre on themes of isolation and connection, resilience and reflection.

Orpheus in the Record Shop is written by acclaimed rapper, writer and world record

holding beatboxer Testament, and it explores the power of the solo voice within a communal space and the relationship between performer and audience. The show is a co-production between Leeds Playhouse and Opera North and includes a socially distanced orchestra of eight musicians and one singer.

It has been amazing to be back in a theatre and work with the brilliant team at the Playhouse. I have to say I have felt very safe while in rehearsals and at the venue. Hours of work have gone in from the team here to put measures in place to make sure we were all safe. A big thank you to my programmer, Chloe Anne James, the head of lighting, David Bennion-Pedley, and all the team who were so accommodating and a joy to work with. It was also great to see friend and fellow LD Tigger Johnson lighting the response pieces in the Courtyard Theatre.

It was a strange feeling sitting in the auditorium as an invited audience entered for the first time for our dress run. I didn't think I would be sat here in October 2020.

Stay strong, everyone: we will be back.

I really do wish you were all here. 🚩



Orpheus in the Record Shop
Leeds Playhouse/Opera North
Director: Aletta Collins
Writer and composer: Testament
Lighting designer: Jason Addison
Lighting programmer: Chloe Anne James
Photographer: Anthony Robling



Backup Hardship Fund

Applications are now open



In light of the devastating impact of COVID-19, Backup is announcing the creation of a separate initial Hardship Fund, which will provide limited financial assistance to crew/production personnel and people working in the technical supply chain across the UK entertainment sector, including those from live events, theatre, TV and film, and the technical supply chain to our industry.

"The technicians and their families in our industry, particularly freelancers, are experiencing incredible hardship at the moment and, with the lack of ongoing financial support from the Government, there are many people who are in desperate need of help," says Backup Chairman, John Simpson. "As an industry, we are trying to help ourselves, and Backup is now in a position to be able to offer a small measure of assistance. We still need more donations to help many more of our colleagues in distress."

With the help of its supporters, including "We Make Events", Backup has raised £100,000 to date, with Light Relief agreeing to match this funding with a further £100,000, targeted to help support the lighting community.

This means that there will initially be a total fund of £200,000 allocated to this Hardship Fund, with further fundraising in progress.

During the first application period, from 19 October 2020 (08:00) to 30 October 2020 (20:00), Backup is targeting resources to people who have received NO government grants (e.g. from the furlough scheme (CJRS) and Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS)) and NO grants from other charitable funds (e.g. Theatre Artists Fund, Arts Council, etc.).

All successful applicants will receive funds two weeks after the closing date.

"While we know this is not a perfect solution, and that there are so many technicians in need of assistance, we are ensuring that we help people who have had no financial support whatsoever first," John adds. "If funds are available after this first application period, we will look to help people who have received limited government support or other charitable support."

To apply, visit www.backuptech.uk/apply/hardship-form.

How you can support Backup

Backup offers support and help to get people in our industry back on their feet.

Grants are tailored to an individual's needs and can include essential living costs, medical related expenses, advice, re-training and travel.

Backup works with potential recipients to fully understand the support needed and ensure that help is targeted effectively. Backup will stay in contact with recipients and provide ongoing support.

A monthly donation allows Backup to do what it does best – help people get back on their feet. You can set up a monthly donation via direct debit or make a one-off contribution using a credit or debit card.

To donate, please visit www.backuptech.uk/support-backup/support. 🌟

STOP PRESS: Awards announcements

Just as this issue was about to go to press, winners and nominees were announced across several awards...

ALD awards

The winners of the annual ALD awards will be featured in full in the next issue of *Focus*. For now, they are...

The **Fred Foster Award for Production Electrics** was awarded to **Liam Sayer** (Guildhall School of Music and Drama).

The **Michael Northen Award for Lighting Design** this year went to **Euan Davis** of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art.

Josie Ireland, who has been studying this year for her A-levels, has received the **Francis Reid Award for Best Emerging Lighting Designer**.

And finally, the **Blue-i Theatre Technology Award for Excellence in Video** went to **Liam Strong** of Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Congratulations to all the winners!

Olivier award winners

The winners of the 2020 Olivier awards were announced on 25 October. ALD member **Paule Constable** won her fifth Olivier award for her lighting design for the National Theatre's production of *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*. The nominees were all ALD members: **Neil Austin** for *Rosmersholm* at the Duke of York's Theatre, **Howard Hudson** for *& Juliet* at the Shaftesbury Theatre, and **Bruno Poet** for *Uncle Vanya* at the Harold Pinter Theatre.

Black British Theatre awards winners

The second annual Black British Theatre Awards ceremony was broadcast on Sky Arts on 25 October. The awards included a Light and Sound Recognition Award, which was won by Carmen Wright. Simeon Miller and Tony Gayle were also nominated in this category.

Tony award nominations

This year's Tony award nominations were announced on 15 October (ALD members in bold):


















Best Lighting Design in a Play

Jiyoun Chang (*Slave Play*)
Jon Clark (*The Inheritance*)
Heather Gilbert (*The Sound Inside*)
Allen Lee Hughes (*A Soldier's Play*)
Hugh Vanstone (*A Christmas Carol*)

Best Lighting Design in a Musical

Bruno Poet (*Tina: The Tina Turner Musical*)
Justin Townsend (*Jagged Little Pill*)
Justin Townsend (*Moulin Rouge! The Musical*) 🌟

Commercial members

<p>10 Out of 10 Productions 020 8659 2558 www.10outof10.co.uk</p> 	<p>Drafty www.drafty-app.com</p> 	<p>Goboplus/ Cut Colour Plus 020 3603 1335 www.goboplus.com www.cutcolourplus.com</p>  	<p>Zeal Events 01256 359264 www.zeallive.com</p> 
<p>Artifice Industries Ltd www.artificers.co.uk</p> 	<p>The Fifth Estate 01273 660 784 www.thefiftheestate.co.uk</p> 	<p>Illuminate Design 01223 969694 www.illuminatedesign.co.uk</p> 	
<p>Blue-i Theatre Technology 0113 289 1030 www.blue-i.tv</p> 	<p>Entedi 020 3598 3131 www.entedi.com</p> 	<p>Lamp & Pencil 01279 902819 www.lampandpencil.com</p> 	
<p>Chroma-Q 01494 446000 www.chroma-q.com</p> 	<p>Fineline Lighting 01275 871800 www.finelineighting.com</p> 	<p>LX1 Ltd 03330 118 512 www.lx1.uk</p> 	
<p>Collaborative Creations 020 3743 2691 www.collaborativecreations.co.uk</p> 	<p>Follow Me Tracking Solutions 0203 743 2691 www.follow-me.nu</p> 	<p>Panalux 020 8832 4800 www.panalux.biz</p> 	

Thank you for your support! For Corporate members, see page 34.