

FOCUS

ALPD#

The journal of the Association for Lighting Production and Design
October/November 2021

In the backlight this issue:

- A Light Walk
- Lighting magic
- The return of MJ
- Shadows and Spotlights
- ...and much, much more...

Price to non-members £5.00

COLLABRO, Greatest Hits Tour
Director: Matt Pagan,
Designers: Jonny Dickie for RobinsAudio
and Joseph Ed Thomas,
Musical director: Ellie Verkerk,
Lighting designer: Joseph Ed Thomas
LX 1: Sam Ohlsson
Photographer: Danny Kaan and Rhys Davies

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A Light Walk

Sam Bowden walks 101 miles (plus a bit!).

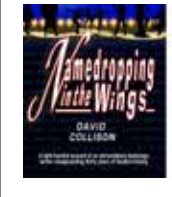
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From the chair...

I would like to open this issue by thanking our editor, Kelli Zezulka, in reaching her 50th issue of Focus magazine. Kelli has done an incredible job in producing beautifully presented issues – on time – again and again, even when the rest of us (well, mainly me) are always a few weeks late on deadlines! Kelli has been editing Focus, maintaining her lighting design career, doing her PhD and working as a lecturer at Salford University. So, congratulations, Kelli – we all love what you do and thank you.

I would also like to give a big shout out to Sam Bowden and his colleague Lewis Dainton in completing their Light Walk from the RSC Stratford to the NT London last month. They raised a huge £14,000 for both Backup and the Lumière scheme. Thanks also must go to Chauvet for their support in the walk and to the members of the ALPD team who couldn't do the walk in

person, due to work commitments, but did achieve the 110 miles at home over the month of September. You can read more on page 34.

Also last month, the Lumière 2020 and ALD Bootcamp teams were all awarded the 2021 Lightmongers award for their innovation on creating each event and for all the hard work in making the Bootcamp and Lumière 2020 actually happen for so many people last year. See page 21. Congratulations to Katharine Williams, Charlotte Burton and Rory Beaton for Lumière 2020, and to Tim Deiling and Rob Casey for the ALD Bootcamp.

We seem to be having a busy autumn, with many members returning to work, but it is also very obvious not everyone has returned back into the industry; we have lighting staff shortages even though the industry is still running at less capacity than before. This can put



Johanna Town
ALPD chair

a strain on the workforce who have returned and we must all try to make sure we reset better and look after each other.

The ALPD feels the time has come to remind producers and employers of the working practices our members expect and have signed up to. The professional practice guides are a reminder to producers of what we actually do and what all the different job roles mean. The job descriptions reiterate how complex the world of lighting has become and the skills that are required.

All the documentation you need to explain your job role to a producer and the working practices you adhere to and expect, as well as all the contract checklists, are on

From the chair...

Johanna Town

the open side of the ALPD website. They are here for you to use, for you to point a producer or employer to, and to share with your colleagues if needed. These documents have taken many hours of volunteered time to create so if you or a colleague find them useful please help contribute to their making through your membership of the association. We are always happy to hear from members of any amendments you feel necessary. We will be trying to get a letter out to as many employers and producers as possible over the next month so if you have a public contact email or address of a producer or employer who you would like to receive this, please get in touch with a list to the office.

While on the subject of work I have been asked to remind members that the new freelance branch of Bectu is now up and running. Please make sure you are in the right

branch for your membership, as we are still hearing of new members, having stated their job descriptions correctly, being placed into film or TV or regional branch, so do check. It's important you are in the right branch to get the most out of the union.

You may have also read in recent ALPD bulletins that we have restarted our social events in person, which is great. As well as drinks evenings we are now including coffee socials, and both are a great way to come and have a relaxing chat with friends and colleagues. We are there to answer questions and give advice if needed alongside having just a good old gossip about life. I was sorry to have missed the first drinks at the NT and hope to come along to an event very soon this autumn.

I am writing this opening from the new Hall For Cornwall, Cornwall's largest touring and producing house.

HFC was closed for three years while being rebuilt front of house, and I was opening their first touring show, *Fisherman's Friends the Musical*. We had an interesting two weeks fitting up and opening in a theatre/building site – think running back to the hotel's toilets and having lunch sitting on the street curb. I would like to thank my whole team – Dan Street (programmer), Darran Curtis (production electrician), Trix, JP Christian and Jack Hathaway, along with all the Hall For Cornwall new staff, especially Josh Reeves, the new technical manager – for all their hard work under exceptional circumstances.

So in haste and returning to my production desk – I hope you enjoy this edition of *Focus* and continue to have a safe and enjoyable return to work.

Jo 

The Memory of Water
Hampstead Theatre
Director: Alice Hamilton
Designer: Anna Reid
Lighting designer: Johanna Town
Photographer: Helen Murray



A baby on the way

David Ayton is pondering parenthood



I've spent the past few weeks mentoring student programmers at Mountview and Guildhall. With our first baby due in a few weeks, I've been conscious about not putting myself in the position of my phone ringing, and me running out of a tech session, leaving a production and a lighting designer in the lurch. It's frustrating to have had to turn down work – and there were offers of some shows I really wanted to work on – however, it goes without

saying that this isn't an event I can miss! I'm thankful that Louisa at Mountview and Nick at Guildhall have been understanding that I have been liable to disappear at any moment – though thankfully the call hasn't come yet!

Naturally I've been thinking a lot about how to juggle a freelance career with being a parent – there are the advantages of being able to pick and choose my jobs a bit more than my current system of just saying yes to everything that fits in the diary – to ensure that I will have time at home after doing a show. However, the nature of our industry is what's frustrating at times: long days, six days a week means that even when I'm working in London and can be at home every night, I still couldn't be around for bedtime every evening, for example. As much as this level of routine won't

be an issue in the coming months, at the point when this little one is at school, how can I simply disappear for six days at a time and only be around on Sundays? Don't get me wrong – I'm sure that before too long I'll be crying out for a decent night's sleep in a hotel while away on a job (even if it is a Travelodge), but what I can't get to marry up in my head is how to keep on being freelance, without there being times when I'm an absent parent.

Of course, I appreciate that becoming a father means there are sacrifices to be made, but friends of mine with more "normal" jobs don't have to think about sacrificing their careers alongside having a social life, tidying the house and sleeping through the night. As much as I'd like to be writing about how our industry should change to avoid losing the talent of freelancers

after they become parents, I won't hold out much hope. With not very much discernible change after the year of lockdown calling for an improvement to working practices, I won't be getting my hopes up. However, it is always reassuring to hear of people who somehow manage to juggle parenthood with working in theatre – no matter how convoluted the childcare arrangements end up being. I still have ambitions for my freelance career, and safe in the knowledge that all parents are just making it up as they go along anyway, I won't be running away for a full-time job with the security that comes with it anytime soon.

That's not to say things won't change in the years ahead – it's impossible to predict what I will make of this crazy industry we call our own when I have a family to

think of as well. But for now, I'm in the lucky position to be able to take a few months off – certainly more than the two weeks' paternity leave a full-time job would allow me. I'm not the first, and I definitely won't be the last prospective parent to wonder how to make this all work. For those of you with kids, please let me know how you manage to make it work – I might even need a support group! I'm sure that panto season for me this year will be hectic in a slightly different way – oh, yes, it will! 🍀

Do you have any tips for David – and our other members with children and/or caring responsibilities? Email professionals@thealpd.org.uk and we'll publish your collective advice in a future issue of Focus. 🍀

MJ writes again!

Mark Jonathan is back



Once we were in lockdown without work, I started to run out of things to say so I stopped writing in Focus but as

we're going back to work it seems I have some things to say so, dear readers, I'm back!

Since my last article the ALD has renamed itself as the ALPD. This simply clarifies something that we were already doing in representing everyone working in performance lighting and not just LDs. The Exec spent a long time, under the brilliant leadership of chair Johanna Town, working on the name. I certainly wanted a name that everyone would like so I was sad at the AGM that there were a few objections to the

name, although I think there was unanimous support to the sentiment of our wish to clarify ourselves as an organisation for everyone in lighting. I'm glad that our logo retains its recognisable red font which I think has considerable "brand value".

So, it's on this subject of team inclusivity that I have been spurred on to write. While it's normal practice for different team members to be on different rates of pay, we hear on a recent production that the producer was paying per diems at different rates to members of the same team. This is unfair, especially when the lowest paid team member was also getting penalised by being paid lower PDs. Our advice is that these things always need to be agreed in advance in the contract. To avoid finding that you're on a lower rate than a colleague you do need to share information with each other. So, our suggestion is that team leaders,

whether they be the LD or production lighting chief, should try to ensure that other members of the team are on the same deal for meal allowances or per diems. The main point is to get these things in your contract, letter of agreement or job order. It never works out retrospectively. It also worth asking for "favoured nations", which means that you are on the same rate as others.

I'm reminded of the first time I flew back from LA when I was sitting upright for eleven hours in the squalid back row of the plane and the stage designer was reclining in the luxurious front row of the plane. I didn't let that happen again, but many flights later I found myself very embarrassed on a long-haul flight as I found the LX team were spread in all three classes on the plane depending on what they had asked the producer for. It seems like we need to liaise with each other and stick together.



Private Lives
Theatre Royal Bath
Director: Christopher Luscombe
Set and costume designer: Simon Higlett
Lighting designer: Mark Jonathan
Sound designer: Jeremy Dunn
Photographer: Tristram Kenton

I'm not the only one who has been going back to work and coping with the anomalies of continually changing Covid regulations, not only in the UK but also in whatever country one is going to work in and, in the case of Europe, managing the totally not "oven ready" deal that this incompetent UK government has saddled us with. Let's be clear: The countries within the EU and

Schengen area are not deliberately applying tough rules on the UK because of Brexit; they're simply applying the same existing rules that are applied to all countries that are not in the EU. We just didn't know how harsh that was and with a hard Brexit that's what we get. I wonder if the British government realises how many freelancers are going to be affected by the lack of any

agreement. Certainly, having told us to retrain in IT they have made their lack of support for the arts loud and clear. The cost of the visa application for my job in Norway was about £750, not to forget the raft of my time preparing all the paperwork, which included copying my signed contract, obtaining an invitation letter, and providing details of travel insurance, flight, accommodation, and a list of all previous visits ever made to the EU! In my case, this crashed the online portal and I'd only gone back a couple of years and had made thirty journeys to the EU. The Norwegian approval took over four months to be approved. Luckily, I had allowed enough time, but that may not always be the case, and it certainly isn't for young opera singers who previously might get a call to stand in when a singer is indisposed and rush to the airport to come to the

MJ writes again!

Mark Jonathan

rescue. The support I received from the Norwegian National Opera and Ballet was exemplary. Thank you Jane-Eve Straughton, who is the new administrator there and who valiantly managed not only the post-Brexit issues but also the ever-changing Covid regulations that were being set both by UK government and also the Norwegian government.

The Norwegian Opera House in Oslo plunges dramatically into the fjord and is quite a sightseeing opportunity as visitors can walk up the roof of the stunning building. Opportunities to swim in the cool waters of the fjord abound, which I enjoyed on a daily basis with both creative colleagues and singers. The inside of the opera house is both beautiful and technically advanced. Having watched some rehearsals in the rehearsal room where the entire set had been built, I set to lighting

using the substantial moving light rig, with help from the amenable lighting supervisor Ole-Frederik Iverson along with two programmers working half-day shifts. We were making good progress when a strike across the cultural sector brought our production of *Dead Man Walking* to an abrupt end. We stayed for another two weeks ever hopeful that the strike would be resolved but in the end the entire run of the production was cancelled, as was Eugene Onegin which was already in rehearsal. So, with some sadness in our hearts, we came home.

Prior to leaving for Oslo I was delighted to finally meet ALPD member Callum McDonald, the first of my two Lumières that I mentored, who came to London for the excellent equipment shoot-out hosted by the ROH lighting department. On my return from Oslo I finally got to meet my other

Lumiere, ALPD member Gianni Bertoli, who came to London to see the newly reopened *Phantom of the Opera*. While Gianni was in London he received a call from ALPD designer Bernd Purkrabek, who needed Gianni to take over an opera production in France. I'm relieved to hear that Bernd's urgent departure caused by his wife being involved in a car accident has resolved and his wife is well along with their newborn baby. We all wish Bernd and his family every happiness. I'm reminded to mention that if members need an associate to help in Italy you could always contact Gianni.

While in London I spend some days filling in my (post-Brexit) Austrian visa. Although I'm not required to list all my previous visits to the EU I am required to provide copies of three months of my bank statements to prove that I am solvent. I feel this is a bit of an invasion into my privacy but

if that's what's needed to get a job I comply. The interview is conducted via the back entrance of the Austrian embassy and the lady who interviews me and goes through the copious paperwork is very congenial. She is from Vienna and knows the Theater an der Wien, the opera house where I shall work. This is a much more pleasant experience than I have ever had at the US embassy. I make sure she knows I didn't vote for Brexit and tell her my idea that while I thought Remainers should be given free passage at the EU border those who wanted to leave should be automatically stripped searched. She liked my idea. I leave, offering a jaunty "auf Wiedersehen". I receive a text in under 24 hours to say that I can collect my passport but not whether my visa has been approved. I return to the embassy and see the same lady. I compliment her on the speed of processing the visa. She



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says that's because I had provided all the paperwork required and, with a twinkle in her eye, asks if I wouldn't like to look inside my passport to see if my visa had been granted. I open my still treasured red passport and there, thankfully, is the visa. Elated, I offer a "vielen Dank" and "auf Wiedersehen". As I travel home to

my soon-to-be-sold London home, I consider how this will be an added expense and time consuming when I move out of London. Meanwhile, unlike the Austrians, who took under 24 hours to process my visa, members with overseas work should bear in mind that the Norwegian Embassy took four months and –

MJ writes again!

Mark Jonathan

longer still – our own HMRC took over four months to sign and stamp an Austrian form. However, I had made a mistake on the form and the Austrian management asked me to get another ZSQ-1 form signed by HMRC. I wrote back straight away asking if HMRC could process the form as a matter of urgency as I cannot be paid without the signed

form. After waiting a month, I called HMRC, which confirmed receipt of my letter. I was told that the department dealing with the form may not be spoken to or even have an internal request sent to them and that my form will be dealt with next June, in 2022. “This just won’t do,” I remonstrate. As a special concession they agree to look at my request on 28

December. I groan as this is two weeks after I will have finished the job.

Having been in rehearsals in London for *Private Lives* I travel on to Bath for the production week and previews. Having already had three members of the company off

for ten days with Covid, we arrive in Bath with some trepidation, especially as Bath had the highest score for Covid cases. Mask wearing in the hotel and the theatre was very much in evidence. What a treat it was to come back to the Theatre Royal Bath and what a hub of creativity it is. Within a few hours I bump into Deborah Warner, who is the new director of the *Ustinov*; her regular LD is doing a recce and warm greetings are exchanged with Jean Kalman, who I worked with both at Glyndebourne and the NT. Moments later at the stage door I find LD Charles Balfour and director James Dacre who are also in tech for *Blue/Orange* in the *Ustinov*. Later in the week I catch up with ALPD LD Joe Price, based in Bristol; he’s lighting the Christmas show in the Egg, which is the Bath Theatre Royal’s third theatre.



Marko and Gianni Bertoli

October/November 2021 – “More art, less tools...”

Our production gets in on Sunday and we are focusing by Monday afternoon, lighting act two and act three (Amanda's apartment in Paris) by Monday evening, changing over to act one on Tuesday morning focusing and then lighting act one (the adjacent hotel balconies). The beautiful set design is by Simon Higlett and the production is directed by Christopher Luscombe. Despite a very short production period to mount the show, with our first preview on a Thursday matinee, we are calm and relaxed, happy in the knowledge that we are being supported by the exemplary technical department. Having ensured we are all set up on Sunday, chief electrician George Seal works in the Ustinov with Charles Balfour. I work with the calm and charming Guy Jones, who is my freelance production electrician and re-lighter, and the brilliant deputy chief ALPD

member Will Burgher, whose fingers dextrously programme, while assistant electrician Lizzie Donaldson focuses along with Chris Barham and Chris Sealy. ALPD member Chris Barham is also a senior lecturer in lighting, sound and digital production at Bath Spa Uni, and I thoroughly approve that he can keep his hand in working production days alongside some of his former students. It's a joy to return to Bath and find that standards are as high as ever. In moments of downtime, I tour the foyers and am reminded of how many LDs have lit there over many decades. I raise a glass to celebrate that this fine theatre built in 1805 and its fine staff are in such exemplary working order.

I must just send congratulations and appreciation for Hugh Chinnick's stunning re-creation of the Patt 23 as the 23M. Hugh has spent much time, care and love bringing this

iconic light back to life. The ALPD must also thank Hugh for his generous donation of a 23M, which is in a raffle for new members. Such was the enthusiasm that some members toyed with resigning and re-joining. Suffice it to say that the affection and delight being accorded by members of the lighting fraternity who have acquired one is similar to holding a newborn babe! 🍀



Derren Brown: Showman

Charlie Morgan Jones juggles jobs

In this bizarre semi-out-of-a-pandemic world we now live in, I was thrilled to see shows I was keen to light from 2020 moving to firm(ish) dates in late '21.

Of course start dates were still a movable feast right up until rehearsals began (even then I wasn't entirely convinced!), and so for the first time in nearly 20 months I had to keep on top of my diary again. It's amazing how it seemed so natural, a year and a bit ago, to be juggling three or four imminent techs at a go. How quickly we've become accustomed to the sloth-like nature Covid has inflicted upon us.

Having had a close association with the Copenhagen Opera Festival for a few years and with 2020's ideas all fallen by the wayside, I was eager to head up the lighting for this year's summer outing. The dates: August 18 to August 29. Was I available? Yes.

Preparation immediately got underway for designing the lights on the main outdoor festival stage, a short Puccini in Copenhagen's beautiful old stock exchange – Børsen – as well as a host of other "pop-ups" across the city. It was going to be brilliant! I would get to spend my summer – and, crucially, my birthday (gifts may be sent via my agent!) – in the best city in the world!

Then the call came. Derren Brown: *Showman*, a brilliant new piece, which we were days away from opening last year, was moving its dates. Teching... the week beginning August 23, opening August 28, the day before I was meant to arrive back from Copers.

I don't intentionally write these articles with peril equal to that of an early *Desperate Housewives* episode, but it did sort of feel... unnecessarily dramatic! Perhaps there was some John Williams


epic playing on the radio in the background...

I explained my situation to Derren's amazing and understanding producer... and... that was that.

Well. Actually. What was what? We hadn't decided on anything. I'd just gone into a mind-maze of assumption and figured they'd get someone younger, sexier, more appealing to wider audien– no, wait. That's Hollywood. I just thought they'd go with someone who could... y'know... be at the theatre!

I obviously called my brilliant agent – Lucia – immediately, and we (she) came up with a plan:

I was to be in London for the final two weeks of rehearsals, we'd use ETC's Augment3d to plot the entire show at White Light, and we'd bring on my regular collaborator and wonderful associate lighting designer, Clancy Flynn.



*Derren Brown: Showman
Lighting designer: Charlie Morgan Jones
Associate lighting designer: Clancy Flynn
Lighting programmer: Matt Shraga
Photographer: Greenbeanz Photography*

than expected, so we were down a programmer with only a month before opening...

Like the opening lines of a *Stingray* episode – "anything could happen in the next half hour."

There are, of course, hundreds of brilliant programmers out there, but we were determined to find someone who fitted with the existing team, in these extraordinary

circumstances – teching and lighting a brand-new show with the LD 1,200km away.

[enter Matt Shraga]

Matt is an excellent programmer who's just graduated from Guildhall. We worked together in 2020 on

Thrillingly, Team DB went for it!

It was a vote of confidence – I was quite convinced I'd lost the job – but this plan saved us!

Paul Walmsley – a frequent Derren Brown'er – was going to program and all would be well!

It was plain sailing for a couple of months until...

[smash cut to a massive curveball]

Paul had to go back to Oman (where he has a full time job, but took leave to come and program *Walküre* with me) two weeks earlier

Derren Brown: Showman

Charlie Morgan Jones

an online version of *Grease the Musical*, for his school, and got along famously. We're thrilled he's available to jump in last minute!

So. To recap. Matt, Clancy and I will pre-program the show (a design that has existed since January 2020!) in mid-August, and then Matt and Clancy will make that vision a reality during the tech in late August. I arrive back the day after opening night and then have a week while we continue to rehearse during previews in Plymouth to look at the show before I head to Canada.

Thank GOD we have our astonishing production electrician – Andy Murrell (a veteran of DB) – to keep us all in check and ticking along so smoothly!

We start rehearsals. Well, actually they started rehearsals two weeks before I could be there, but I was in Copenhagen for this too. I swear, I don't try to make myself

look unemployably unavailable to producers – well, certainly not the Danish ones!

Thankfully, the UK has relaxed its rules on people who've had at least two pricks this year and I don't have to isolate on my return from Denmark, so I can jump straight into *Showman*. Matt and Clancy have agreed to join me in the rehearsal room so they can meet the team and get a feel for what is – really – a very different show to most musicals/operas/plays they'll have worked on.

What absolute bliss it is to see everyone again in the room. Andrew O'Connor and Andy Nyman are the kindest, most giving directors you could wish for. Everything is up for grabs. If you have an idea – pitch it. If you have a thought – say it. I guess the unwritten rule is "don't be a dick". There are no egos on show, no dictators, it's pure joy.

As ever with a brand-new DB show, the scenes are mostly set, but the dialogue is pretty free at the mo. Derren knows the beats he has to hit, but the road to the beats can vary from "long and winding" to "oh, there was the beat", and it makes it sort of impossible to cue the show from dialogue, so it's a combination of visuals, certain specific words we look out for, and – most often – sound effects.

During rehearsals, I pitch broad brush strokes of colours to the team. Colours that match the tone of the scene on stage, which seems to go down well. I jot down potential cues in a notebook, rather than a script or score – an unusual process, but not your usual show!

Clancy and Matt have been into rehearsals and everyone got along well – Derren's particularly in love with Clancy, who used to be an embalmer, and that's right up his street!

It's time to pre-program.

We're off to the Vis Room at White Light (which is supplying our kit – including 17 of my favourites: VL2600s), and spend two blissful days – like the old times – programming the bones of the show. Having done five DB techs before, I know it'll change enormously in the week before the first show, but it's important I give Clancy compositions of lights that I like the look of. I create the looks for different scenes, as well as some effects, dramatic moments and DB's entrances for both acts. Then I leave on the first plane to Copenhagen the next day.

It feels incredibly odd (and a little alarming) to be leaving a show before it's even focused, but I know it's in excellent hands. While I'm in Copers, Clancy and I keep in close contact and they update me on most of the day's activities.



*Derren Brown: Showman
Lighting designer: Charlie Morgan Jones
Associate lighting designer: Clancy Flynn
Lighting programmer: Matt Shraga
Photographer: Greenbeanz Photography*

90% of the light-looks stay, but the directors wanted something different for one scene – and, on the hoof, the Amazing Flynn creates this beautiful pinky/purple scene (I'm not sure I'd have ever been brave enough to do it!), and it is stunning!! At least in the WhatsApp pic!

After twelve joyous, exhausting days in Denmark, it's a long travel day to Plymouth...who knew it was so far?!

First thing Monday morning, Clancy and I step through the cues, and it looks superb! Of course, I make changes; I adjust intensities, colours and timings... and I relight one whole

Derren Brown: Showman

Charlie Morgan Jones

scene (the pinky/purple stays!) but, my gosh, they've done the best job.

We're playing to packed houses, and the audiences are reacting like I've never seen before. I obviously, very literally, couldn't have done this show without Clancy – and it goes to show that with the right people, and the right preparation, anything is possible.

I don't really know what this article is. Is it about amazing associates? Probably.

Is it about teamwork? Absolutely.

Is it a love letter to Clancy Flynn, who I'll forever be grateful for? Definitely.

If you've a chance, do come and see this magnificent show – Derren's done it again.

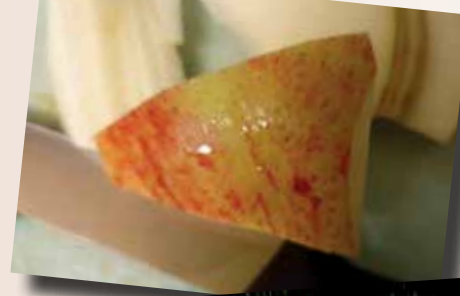
What a showman. 🍷



A postcard from...

Sherry Coenen, Peckham

Greetings from Theatre Peckham where Sam Osborne and I are lighting Boy's Khaya for Tavaziva Dance. I am lighting designer and Sam will be taking it out on tour. Once the tour is finalised we will re-light it for film as it is also being recorded for streaming. Hope you enjoy these shots (including the apple that we realised looked very similar to the texture we were creating on our white floor...). 🍏





PLASA

It was good to put some names to faces at PLASA in September. And my thanks to those who gave some time on the stand to give me support and useful information this year. It was particularly heart-warming to watch colleagues meeting in person after months of having only Zoom, phone and internet contact. We also met a number of students and new entrants to the profession over the three-day period.

Office Oracle

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

Sponsored Student scheme

The ALPD is delighted to announce that the 2022 Sponsored Student scheme is now open for applications. The scheme is partly funded by Corporate members of the ALPD.

The scheme offers students who have not previously been members of the ALPD the opportunity to enjoy free ALPD membership until the end of March 2023. To qualify for Sponsored Student membership, applicants will not have previously been a member of the ALPD 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 ALPD, such as members' socials and visits to shows and theatres. Membership provides vital interaction and connection between established figures in professional lighting and video design, and the next generation of talented designers, programmers and technicians.

Member benefits for students also include complimentary copies of the ALPD magazine, Focus, as well as full access to the ALPD website and access to set up your own micro-site to start promoting yourself and your work. Members also receive a 25% discount on the monthly or annual premium subscription fee for Mandy.com.

Jack Wills, of the ALPD student working group, explains: "ALPD 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 ALPD. 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.

The closing date for applications is Christmas 2021, but the earlier you submit your application, the longer your FREE membership will run for. All memberships run until the end of March 2023 by which point you will need to have informed us if you wish to continue your membership in the normal student category (£36 per year). To join as a sponsored student, visit www.thealpd.org.uk/join.

Those members currently on the Sponsored Student scheme have received further information about

their status via an email bulletin or can contact the ALPD membership team (membership@thealpd.org.uk).

Working groups

We are looking for new members for the Students working group. If you would be interested in joining this team do get in touch with office@alpd.org.uk for information. We also have proposals for future working groups for concert touring and console programmers. If you might be interested in joining either of those groups, do please get in touch.

Tony Awards

Congratulations to Hugh Vanstone for winning Best Lighting Design of a Play for *A Christmas Carol*, as well as to Justin Townsend for winning Best Lighting Design of a Musical for *Moulin Rouge! The Musical*.

Patt 23M

Some of you visiting our stand at PLASA may have seen the beautiful little Pattern 23M, a lovingly created

1/3rd scale version of the iconic Strand Pattern 23. Or you may have seen it reviewed by Rob Halliday in LSi. The brainchild of Hugh Chinnick, it is available from his company Pacific Lighting with a choice of ceiling/floor plate, swivel arm wall bracket or telescopic stand. Hugh is offering fellow ALPD members an opportunity to purchase at a discount using the one-time code ALPD2021 at pacificlighting.myshopify.com.

Lightmongers Award

This year, the award from the Worshipful Company of Lightmongers was awarded to five key people who gave their time and skills to create opportunities to keep lighting alive when theatres and events were suspended. Each of them brought ideas and energy to make the Lumière scheme and ALD Bootcamp happen. Congrats to Rory Beaton, Charlotte Burton, Rob Casey, Tim Deiling and Katharine Williams. 🍀

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Diary dates 2021–2022

22 November	TheatreCraft, Royal Opera House, London
20 December	Annual lighting lunch
10–11 May 2022	PLASA Focus Leeds*
4–6 September 2022	PLASA show, London*

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

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

* The ALPD will have a presence at these events.

Contact us

The Association of Lighting Designers, trading as
the Association for Lighting Production and Design
Redoubt House, Edward Road, Eastbourne BN23 8AS
www.thealpd.org.uk office@thealpd.org.uk
Company registered in England & Wales no. 10079797

President: Richard Pilbrow

The ALPD Board

Vice President: Rick Fisher rick.fisher@thealpd.org.uk

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Member representatives

Professionals: Lucy Carter, David Ayton professionals@thealpd.org.uk

Companies: Stuart Porter companies@thealpd.org.uk

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Education: Sofia Alexiadou education@thealpd.org.uk

Equity: Zoe Spurr equity@thealpd.org.uk

Bectu: Alex Fernandes bectu@thealpd.org.uk

Co-opted committee members

Tom Boase, Charlotte Burton, Paule Constable, Tom Harrison,
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(firstname.surname@thealpd.org.uk)

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The opinions published within Focus are not necessarily those of the ALPD.
E&OE. Content deadline for the next issue: 22 November 2021

New members

Welcome!

Professional members

Freddy Malow, London
Andrew McAnulty, Essex
Stuart Moorhouse, Huddersfield
Tim van 't Hof, Richmond

Affiliate members

Martyn Case, Cheshire
Tamsin Harris, Hereford
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The Loft Theatre Company
Smart Light & Sound

Corporate member

Marl International

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Alice Beth Gayler, London
Skylar MTM Turnbull Hurd, London
Oliver J Hynds, Cheshire
Murong Li, London
Dylan J Mulholland, London
Lucinda Katherine Plummer, London
Calum Priestley, London

Lukas Rackauskas, London

Alfie Sissons, Halton

Matthew Smith, Sidcup

Ryan Alexander Smith, Glasgow

James H W Taylor, Sidcup

Harry Wilson Williams, Devon

Professional members' shows

opening in October and November

October

1 Alex Wardle *Antigone* Mercury Theatre, Colchester / **1** Emma Jones *Totentanz* Tramway Theatre, Glasgow / **2** Rick Fisher *Carmen* Leeds Grand Theatre / **4** Joe Underwood *The Friday Freedom Fighters Etcetera* Theatre / **4** David G Coull (associate lighting designer) *Northern Girls* York, Bridlington & Redcar / **6** Alan Mooney *Hatch* The Civic Theatre, Dublin / **6** Ed Frearson *The Antipodes* The Robinson Theatre, Cambridge / **7** James D Stokes *Into Battle* Greenwich Theatre, London / **7** Will Burgher *The Good Life* Fiery Angel / **7** Sherry L Coenen *A Place for We* Park200 / **7** Ross WJG Hayward (associate lighting designer) *Deciphering* 49 Elm Hill / **8** Sherry L Coenen *The Bed* Little Angel Studios / **8** Alex Musgrave *Home* Chichester Festival – Minerva / **8** Zoe Spurr *Road* Northern Stage / **8** Jonathan Chan *Different Owners* at Sunrise Camden Roundhouse – Studio / **9** Nina Dunn (video/projection designer) *The Shark is Broken* Ambassadors Theatre London / **9** Joseph Ed Thomas *Collabro*, Greatest Hits Tour UK tour / **10** Joe Price (lighting and video/projection designer) *Haydn The Creation* St George's Bristol / **10** Malcolm Rippeth *Stiffelio* Opéra National du Rhin / **10** Gianni Bertoli (assistant lighting designer) *Paradiso* XXXIII Teatro Alighieri Ravenna / **13** Jane Lalljee *Antigone* Storyhouse, Chester / **13** Ed Frearson *Cluedo: A Musical Murder* The Robinson Theatre, Cambridge / **13** Joe Price (touring relighter) *I Stand For What I Stand* On Tobacco Factory, Bristol / **15** Zeynep Kepekli *The Last Shelter* Sadler's Wells Theatre / **16** Kieron Johnson *West Side Story* Symphonic Dances Leeds Grand Theatre / **16** Joe Price *Louisa* Lynton Town Hall / **16** Kieron Johnson *Halfway and Beyond* Leeds Grand Theatre / **16** Jason Addison *The Last Dinosaur* The Civic, Barnsley / **17** Abi Turner *Essentially Black* Camden People's Theatre / **20** Alex Forey *Stop Kiss* GBS Theatre, Royal Academy of Dramatic Art / **21** Kelli Zezulka *The Trial* Proper Job Theatre / **21** Ric Mountjoy (associate lighting designer) *War Requiem* Gran Teatre del Liceu, Barcelona / **22** Rick Fisher *Night, Mother* Hampstead Theatre / **23** James C McFetridge *Sylvan* Victoria Park, Belfast / **27** Harry Owen (production electrician) *La Traviata* Main Stage, Royal Opera House / **27** Sherry L Coenen *The Sugar House* The Finborough Theatre / **30** Charlie Morgan Jones Gianni Schicci Canadian Opera Company

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

November

1 James D Stokes *Pepper & Honey* Derby Theatre / **1** Edward Saunders *DN2 The Place* / **2** Jonathan Chan *Belvedere* Old Red Lion Theatre / **2** Abi Turner (associate lighting designer) *Milk and Gall* Theatre 503 / **2** Amy Hill *The Girl Who Was Very Good At Lying* Omnibus Theatre Clapham / **2** James C McFetridge *In The Name of the Son* Lyric Theatre Belfast / **3** Claire Childs *Humane Downstairs* – Pleasance London / **3** Palle Palme *Saturday Night Fever* China Theatre, Stockholm / **4** Malcolm Rippeth *The Seven Pomegranate Seeds* Rose Theatre Kingston / **6** Zoe Spurr *Fantastically Great Women Who Changed The World* / **10** John Rainsforth *Curtains* Bellairs Theatre / **12** Nina Dunn (video/projection designer) *Manor Dorfman* Theatre – Royal National Theatre / **12** Zeynep Kepekli *Past Present* Linbury Theatre, Royal Opera House / **17** Will Burgher *Rapunzel* The Theatre, Chipping Norton / **17** John Rainsforth *Cinderella* Bellairs Theatre / **19** Gareth Hughes *Beauty & The Beast* Theatr Clwyd / **19** Malcolm Rippeth *Measure for Measure* Sam Wanamaker Playhouse / **23** Edmund Sutton *Bonny and Read* Brockley Jack Theatre / **25** John Rainsforth *Rapunzel* The Customs House / **26** Jason Addison *Aladdin* Gordon Craig Theatre / **26** Jane Lalljee *Peter Pan* Octagon Theatre Bolton

Shadows and Spotlights

Mark Fisher on the latest publication from the Envelope Room

Lighting designers are team players who work alone. They do their job in the company of others, but for the most part, make their own decisions. With no other lighting designer in the room to offer a second opinion or suggest a different approach, they must trust their instincts and take the plunge.

That's one reason it was fascinating for me to be asked to work on *Shadows and Spotlights*. Published by Scotland's Envelope Room, this 80-page pamphlet comprises interviews with three lighting designers: Kai Fischer, Lizzie Powell and Simon Wilkinson. All are brilliant in their own way and each has an individual approach to the job. Talking to them in depth gave a rare insight into their working methods.

"Their individual personalities really come out," says Lisa Sangster, who commissioned the publication. "There are also similar things that

pop up that I didn't expect, like the way they all talk about the darkness, but it's important that people see that this role can be approached very differently."

Sangster asked me to interview the three designers at the end of 2020 and published *Shadows and Spotlights* this summer, along with a companion volume, *Box Sets*, in which playwright Pamela Carter talks to designer and director Stewart Laing about his equally singular approach.

Presented in question-and-answer format, our conversations range from breaking into the industry to defining what light does, from being part of the devising process to responding to the precision of Samuel Beckett. Each designer is open, honest and, above all, passionate. They don't just love their job, they love making theatre.

With fellow designer Claire Halleran, Sangster set up the Envelope Room in 2013 as a way of supporting, promoting and connecting designers in Scotland. By programming events for set, costume, lighting and video designers, they have attempted to break down the isolation of the job.

"We felt designers were dealing with a lot of the same issues about not being contracted properly, people not really understanding what we do... we all had similar frustrations," says Sangster, as she prepares to leave the organisation for a change of career. "There are loads of assistant producer bursaries and assistant director bursaries but there are not the same pathways for designers, particularly not in Scotland because we're smaller. Designers didn't interact much. We were very separate, so me and Claire said, 'Let's try and bring people together.'"

Her inspiration for the two publications was the Royal National Theatre's *Platform Papers*, a series of interviews with theatremakers, including stage designers Jocelyn Herbert and John Napier, that was published in the 1990s. "I love them because they are small insights into designers or directors," she says. "We're not very good at capturing what designers do. The traditional way is in production photographs and that feels like such a tiny part of it. I wanted to find a way to capture and celebrate designers' work."

She adds: "I've always found comfort in hearing what other designers do."

Below:
The Magic Flute
by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
An Ex Machina production
Performed at Festival d'Opéra de Québec
Director: Robert Lepage
Set and illusion designer: Jamie Harrison
Costume designer: Kym Barrett
Lighting designer: Simon Wilkinson
Photographer: Louise LeBlanc



Shadows and Spotlights

Mark Fisher

I used to love reading a designer and thinking, 'Ah! I do that in my process. I thought I was weird for doing that. They get stressed by the same things. They find the same things challenging.' I wanted to create something that could go into libraries

in drama schools that would be real conversations with real, living and breathing designers from today."

The two limited-edition publications, the first of an intended series, were supported by Creative Scotland and have

been distributed to theatre-design institutes across the UK. They are also on sale through Salamander Street publishers. Starting the series looking at lighting designers was Sangster's way of drawing attention to work that is often hidden (albeit



*Left:
Saturday Night
Conceived by Matthew Lenton
Co-produced by Vanishing Point
(Glasgow), Teatro Nacional São João
(Porto), Centro Cultural Vila Flor –
Teatro Oficina (Guimarães), São
Luiz Teatro Municipal (Lisbon) and
Tramway (Glasgow) in association
with Compagnia Teatrale Europea
Performed at Teatro Nacional São
João, Porto
Director: Matthew Lenton
Set, lighting and projection designer:
Kai Fischer
Costume designer: Leah Lovett
Photographer: João Tuna*

hidden in plain sight). Choosing which lighting designers to focus on was hard, but Wilkinson, Powell and Fischer had everything going for them.

"First of all, we wanted to pick experienced designers so they would have a wealth of work to talk about," she says. "We wanted designers that would have strong working relationships with specific companies or directors because we were interested in how people forge creative relationships. And we liked the mix of work they had, that there was international work and that they've all worked on a broad range of scales."

So enamoured of lighting did Simon Wilkinson become when he was still at school that he based his choice of universities on the reputation of their student theatre companies. While completing a four-year degree in computer engineering

at the University of Edinburgh, he clocked up a remarkable 40 shows. After working on conferences and corporate parties, he broke into the theatre industry, building an enduring relationship with Glasgow's Vox Motus.

In the opening interview of *Shadows and Spotlights*, he talks about being a storyteller, "just with a very odd set of tools". He sees his job as guiding the audience's attention. "Light tells you where to look on a stage," he says. "On a normal stage, the human eye goes to the brightest object so in that moment of reveal when the curtain goes up it's totally up to you to decide who the important people in the space are. I'm a big fan of side light for that reason because it sculpts people and pulls them away from the background."

Despite a longstanding love of theatre, Lizzie Powell was 27 before

she began a backstage course at LAMDA. That led to a placement as a production assistant on a European tour with *Complicité* whose lighting designer, Paul Anderson, would prove a key influence, as would her mentor, Rick Fisher.

After landing a bursary to work on the first production of *Billy Elliot: The Musical*, she went on to work for everyone from the National Theatre of Scotland to London's Royal Court. One of her most established creative relationships is with Dominic Hill, artistic director of Glasgow's Citizens Theatre.

In the pamphlet, she echoes Wilkinson's observation about storytelling. "Any successful thing I've seen has been successful because I've listened to the story," she says. "The reason the story has come through clearly is because everybody in that company came



Shadows and Spotlights

Mark Fisher

together. It never tends to be the pieces where I sit there thinking, 'Wow, that lighting is amazing,' or, 'Wow, that sound design is something else.' Of course, you'll really appreciate those things, but to me it's always about whether the story – or whatever the company wanted to be said – hits home. My job is to help that storytelling."

Kai Fischer had been en route to a career in film in his native Germany when a course in stage management and lighting at the University of Glasgow, where he was an exchange student, gave him an appetite for a different profession. He assisted Davy Cunningham after working in the lighting department at Scottish Opera and began a long working relationship with Vanishing Point, the visually minded company for which he has frequently been responsible for lighting and set.

In the interview, Fischer talks about the importance of playing a supporting role in getting the show's message across. "If you're doing a production about someone's personal issue – a health topic or a burning social issue – then, even as a lighting designer, you have to hope people don't walk away talking about the lighting," he says. "Something would have gone wrong on the production if that is what is being talked about. You clearly want to get involved in the social or political conversation. Even as a lighting designer, you hope the show gets its point across."

For her part, Sangster is pleased to have been able to put these gifted designers in the spotlight. "I'm really proud of how successful theatre designers from Scotland are," says Sangster. "The fact that Stewart Laing has won a Tony [for *Titanic*], the fact that Simon Wilkinson has

worked with Robert Lepage [on *The Magic Flute*]... those things are huge and loads of people wouldn't even know. We need to start bigging ourselves up." 🍄

Box Sets and *Shadows and Spotlights* are available from Salamander Street:
www.salamanderstreet.com

The Envelope Room:
www.enveloperoom.org.uk

Left:
Our Ladies of Perpetual Succour
National Theatre of Scotland/Live Theatre
Performed at the Traverse Theatre
Adapted by Lee Hall
Director: Vicky Featherstone
Designer: Chloe Lamford
Lighting designer: Lizzie Powell
Photographer: Manuel Harlan

A Light Walk

Sam Bowden on an epic fundraising trek

A slightly surreal start, having pictures taken of us on the Lydia and Manfred Gorvy Garden Theatre stage at the RSC. At the time the challenge didn't feel overly daunting, just a bit odd – we were finally going to start! Pictures taken, we set off



and as we approached the exit to turn left, Amanda said to us, “Oh, you’re going that way are you?!” Our first directional decision and already the seed of doubt was being planted!

Thankfully, our choice was the correct one (we knew it was, we’d been working on the route for months!). We headed out of Stratford in a south-easterly direction through stunning, serene countryside. Perhaps naively, at the start of the day we said to ourselves, “We’ll stop for a brew at the next café.” There wasn’t one, and we went the whole day without seeing a single café, just fields and fields!

We loved stumbling into villages that you’d otherwise never visit or see, largely all remarkably beautiful. Day one (and two) seemed to take us through a series of fields and along small amounts of road, then drop us into idyllic village after idyllic village. Arriving in one such village, I heard

a “SAM!” I turned around and it was Amanda! Evidently, our route took us straight past her back garden (further vindicating our choice to turn left as we left the RSC!).

It was a long first stint at 15 miles before our first stop and some lunch! Aches and pains started to set in at 20 miles, and we also discovered that while we had fairly accurately plotted the route using OS maps the plotting was point to point so missed corners and bends and didn’t account for farmers who had ploughed their fields, forcing us to go around! All told the distance was a mile or two further than we had anticipated. I was tired and downbeat: the last mile of day one was probably one of my lowest points of the whole walk.

That evening at the hotel, I had one of the best baths of my whole life – there is nothing like a bath for joint pain, I discovered! Stupidly, I



then started looking at the rest of the route. I was aching all over, my energy was drained, I was tired and I started to comprehend just how far an additional 76 miles was going to be over the next four days – I had to have a word with myself. It was stupid to be looking at the rest of the route and trying to comprehend it; it's like daring yourself to quit. I put

it down and promised myself that going forward I would look only at the day I was on and, when I finished it, the day to come. When walking I would only look at the section I was on. I broke it down into the smallest sections I could. We planned two or three stops a day so I knew these were around a third of the route. In my mind “section 1” was halfway to the first stop, “section 2” was to the first stop, “section 3” was halfway to the second stop, and so on. Little wins in my mind were what carried me through. As we progressed, we found other little wins that helped: 10km complete, 10 miles complete, halfway through the day – I'm sure you get the idea!

Day 2 was much easier: six miles less to cover and quite flat. Both of us had a morning bath (I hadn't had a bath in years before this walk!) to warm ourselves up a bit and got going. The first few miles were a

little tough, as it does take a while to get going again – generally it took anywhere between 5km and 10km before you felt like you were in a rhythm. Early on, we dropped on to the Oxfordshire canal for a mile or so. Towpaths are my favourite places to walk; they're so peaceful and it feels like time slows down next to a canal. Walking here was no hardship at all, but the canal went off at a direction that wasn't great for us so we couldn't stay on the path for long. We had an early lunch and a few Jaffa Cakes (essential walking companion!) then we headed off again, and I actually felt great; as the day wore on I just felt better and better. We also started to appreciate the differences in terrain: concrete roads really take it out of you but the pace is good. My favourite terrain is a hard field with short grass – perfect! Nice and bouncy, and soft on the feet!

A Light Walk

Sam Bowden

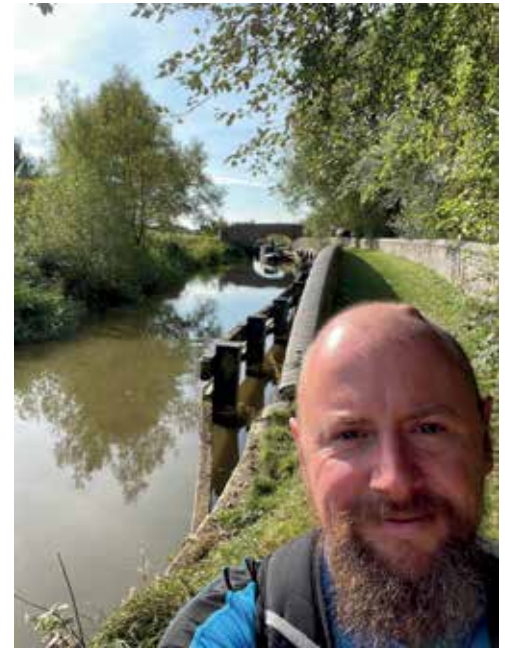
During my practice walks I had tried different types of footwear on different mileages. One thing I had found is that walking boots were great, but by the end of a day they really did take their toll on my feet. The last walk I did before the big one I tried doing 14 miles in running shoes, and it was far better. I decided to walk as much as possible in running shoes, which was now starting to show its benefit. While I was starting to find things easier, my poor friend Lew in his light walking boots was starting to suffer, and blisters were coming through. Toward the end of the day he was in some pain and, unfortunately, over the rest of the walk he couldn't recover from this.

To add insult to Lew's injury the pub we were staying at that night, which we picked specifically for the fine ales and cosy looking bar, rang us to let us know they were closed!

Rather than cask poured ale and freshly cooked food we were left with a beer from the fridge and a Chinese takeaway!

Day 3 was the day we had been fearing really; even though it was slightly less mileage than day 1 it finished with the highest point of the walk. With it being "mizzly" that morning we started in our walking boots to avoid dew on the grass, which was a stroke of genius as one of the first fields we got to was freshly ploughed and frankly looked like something from *The Lord of the Rings*. We couldn't see the other side, just an expanse of freshly churned mud! Three kilometres took an hour; our normal walking pace was 5.5km per hour, so not fun.

I can't put my finger on what it was but Wednesday morning was hard, mentally hard – perhaps it was knowing it was such a big day. It could have been that it was a bit



colder and I hadn't had a breakfast bath! Whatever it was, it was hard work. At stop 1 I just had to sit down by myself for a while and regain composure in my mind; it's odd how these moments affect you. During stint two we reached the halfway distance, but I could tell Lew was in a fair amount of pain now. I didn't have blisters, but the road walking

was starting to make my hips continuously ache; fortunately, I was able to just push on. Because of the pain Lew wanted to keep going and not stop. He felt if he stopped it hurt more trying to get going again, but I needed the breaks – it was how I was managing my mind and day. We tried to compromise and took three short breaks, stopping for ten minutes then going again. All the time there was the nagging thought of that hill at the end of the day. Without drawing too many comparisons to *The Lord of the Rings* it did feel like we were making our way to Mount Doom!

It's funny but sometimes you build something up so much in your head that when you get there it's easy. Both of us were tired and aching, but that climb was probably the easiest part of the whole day. In a way, I think the change in elevation actually helped us both. We were walking on

different parts of our feet and using different muscles, so it was quite enjoyable.

We both hurt. It was the latest finish we had – we'd started at 9.15am and finished at 6.30pm, but we knew we had broken the back of the walk. We were 66 miles in, so two thirds of the full distance. We both had a bath, got ourselves some food and collapsed into bed. Sleep had been a bit of an enemy during the course of the week. I think my brain was so wired that even though physically I was knackered, mentally my brain wouldn't shut off. I didn't get a good night's sleep once.

Day 4 felt like a hard start again. Maybe we were just tired from the day before; perhaps also in our minds there was something that said, "Oh, it should be easy from here," so when it didn't feel easy you almost had to give yourself more of a kickstart to get into the day.



The first three days we'd largely walked through open countryside with the odd village here and there. On day 4 this started to change with us walking through more built-up areas. It felt as though we were closing on London now. A constant struggle throughout was the state of public footpaths; many are through open fields and clearly an inconvenience for farmers who just leave them. Several are just badly maintained and some just don't exist anymore! I have a newfound respect

A Light Walk

Sam Bowden

for anyone who maintains and looks after footpaths across their land – bravo to them all!

Thursday was our worst day for disappearing footpaths. The issue is, if the footpath ends, sometimes



the route around can be a few miles, which is just not what you want when you're tired and you know what it will cost you. So we would scrabble through hedges, go over gates and do what was needed to stay on route. The biggest inconvenience came in the form of HS2! We crossed the M25 on the South Bucks Way footpath, a major footpath that takes you inside the ring. After crossing the bridge, we were greeted by a huge green fence. A man on the gate simply told us, "Nah you can't come through here – you'll have to go to the next bridge." This was a disaster for us, and it couldn't have happened at a worse time or a worse place. The re-route was going to be four miles. Our next stop was on the other side of the building site (maybe 200m away) and also where we were meeting Tom, who was going to join us for the remainder of the walk. We could

see a field next to the site which wouldn't add on much distance to the walk, so we hopped into the field and started walking down. The man from the gate started running towards us, calling out; we completely ignored him and pushed on before he could tell us to turn around. About 30m ahead of us another man was walking toward the fence on the inside and then a further 30m ahead of him another man and another at the end. I turned round and saw two men were now following us through the field! We had no interest in turning around so we ploughed on to the end of the field where a final man was waiting to talk to us! After some polite negotiations and assurances that we weren't "up to no good" we were allowed to go on our way. It was all very dramatic!

Day 5: the last big push! We started the day as a team of four,



with Tom and Michael Brooksbank, who had now joined us, so we had two fresh walkers and two who were pretty worn out, and it took a little while for us to all get on the same pace. We had finished the day before coming out of the woods so it was an immediate change of scenery for us as we entered into built-up suburbia – something of a

culture shock. I have never been so aware of the change in air quality before. We'd been walking through open countryside for days and now we were surrounded by cars, buses and buildings, and I could taste and feel the difference.

The main bulk of the route on day 5 was on the Grand Union canal. We picked this up and took it right up to Paddington station. I hadn't really known what to expect from the canal – it could have gone two ways: really nice and quaint or packed full of shopping trolleys and people from a Neil Gaiman novel! In the end, there was a healthy mix of both! Eventually, we emerged onto Oxford Street, having covered over 100 miles – and what do you know, everyone was walking slower than us!

My OS app ticked under the “1 mile left” mark and a little

skip went through me! We got to Waterloo bridge, and the end was in sight. We took some pictures, walked down the steps around to the National itself, approached it, walked right up, put our hands on it and I said, “touched it” – and then we were done! We sat down, and I had one of the most hard earned and deserved pints of my life ... quickly followed by a second one!



A Light Walk

Sam Bowden

And that was it – we were there; we'd covered the distance!

On reflection, I can't tell you if it was harder or easier than I thought it would be. In a way, it was a little of both. Some parts of the walk felt great and others were so hard. On balance, for me, the hardest

challenge was a mental one – overcoming the naysayer in my mind who would pop up at inconvenient times and say things like, “That leg is hurting a bit; are you sure you're going to be ok?” or “I'm not sure you can get to the end; maybe you should just stop?” and the 2021

classic: “Did you just cough?!” But most of all my hat is off to Lewis. His blisters started on day 2 and did nothing but get worse for the remainder. He was in agony, but he was never going to stop – an inspiration walking next to me.

We have both decided, though, that next time we'll do less than half the miles and more than twice the pubs! 🍷



You can still donate to and support A Light Walk at www.gofundme.com/f/a-light-walk. All money will be split between Backup and the ALPD Lumière scheme. For more information, please visit www.alpd.org.uk/lumiere and www.backuptech.uk.

Production Lumière

Introducing the first Production Lumières

The Production Lumière scheme is getting underway – there is an online seminar program, where the Lumières are hearing from leading industry figures and have the opportunity to ask their own questions.

We're also excited to announce that thanks to the generosity of those who have donated to the scheme, we are also able to offer our production Lumières a further bursary in order for them to undertake a work placement with their mentors. These placements will take place in the coming months, and we look forward to reporting to you all in Focus what they have gained from the scheme and their placements.

Do keep an eye out for the Lumières as you are out and about and if you come across them be sure to introduce yourselves.



Izzy Waugh (Newcastle) – mentored by programmer Victoria Brennan

We couldn't do this without the mentors – so thank you to Victoria, John, Dan, Martin and Fraser, and also to everyone taking part in the online seminars. 🍷



Lewis Byfield (Northamptonshire) – mentored by production electrician John Delaney



Louisa Craig (Glasgow/ London) – mentored by programmer Dan Street



Rachel Stanwood-Jones (London) – mentored by production electrician Martin Chisnall



Dan Heesem (Bristol/ South West England) – mentored by production electrician Fraser Hall

Namedropping in the Wings

Ed Elbourne reviews David Collison's latest book

David Collison will be a familiar name to many in the ALPD – some readers may have worked alongside him and many others will have come across his books on sound design. His autobiography, *Namedropping in the Wings*, takes us through his career spanning a period from the early 1950s to the late 1980s.

And it's a remarkable career. By age 17 he was working with Peter Hall on the sound for the English-language premiere of *Waiting for Godot*. Collison explains that in those days there was no sound designer – that the director would find the sound effects and ask the stage manager to play them from the wings.

He pioneered creating sound effects for specific productions, directors increasingly asking him to curate sound for their shows. He worked with the nascent RSC and

National Theatre, and started to call himself a sound designer, founding Theatre Projects Sound. By 1974 he was able to claim, for a few months, to have designed and supplied sound for every musical in the West End.

Along the way – as alluded by the title – Collison tells us tales about his brushes with famous performers. There's a new famous name on almost every page and plenty of stories for anyone who enjoys celebrity gossip.

Why would anyone working in the performance lighting industry be interested in this book? Well, it offers a fascinating first-hand glimpse of a bygone era – of a smog-covered 1950s West End with a theatre industry run by impresarios and moderated by government censorship. It also offers interesting parallel accounts for anyone who's read *Dramatic*

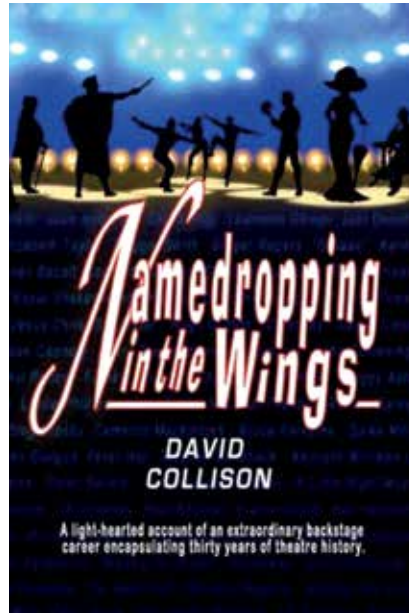
Exchanges, the story of the National Theatre, or indeed Richard Pillbrow's autobiographical story of Theatre Projects – which includes contributions by Collison.

It chronicles the evolution of technical theatre up to the 1980s and while it mostly focuses on sound – the invention of comms systems, FOH mixing, SM desks, microphone techniques – we get glimpses into the parallel evolution of lighting technologies and of lighting design as an established craft.

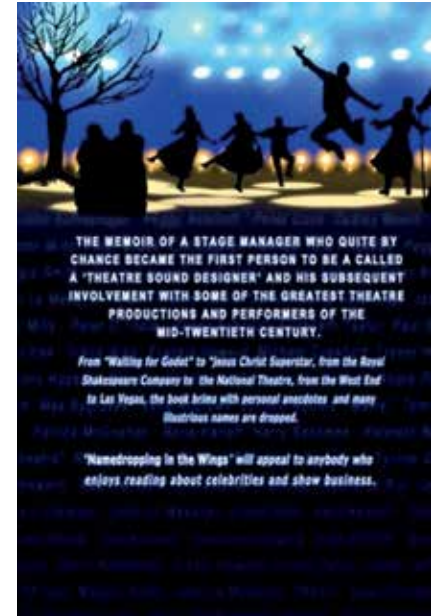
Collison tells his stories with an impassive and often self-depreciating narration. It gives the impression of a bemused observer looking in on the theatre industry – yet it is clear from his trajectory that he was completely dedicated to making theatre, working six to seven days a week for many decades. His enthusiasm comes

across in the energy with which he tells stories, an energy which sometimes spins off into over-long tangents. Sometimes they blunder headlong into anecdotes which should be given more sensitivity to issues of race, gender and sexuality.

















It's a book that doesn't always have a clear target audience – a bit too much celebrity gossip for readers interested only in the history of technical theatre, and vice versa. But it's entertaining to read and at heart an endearing tribute to an industry that Collison clearly loves. It's a story about the importance of being passionate about the art and innovative with technology. It's a story about someone who through their passion and innovation redefined the role of sound in UK theatre. 🍷



Namedropping in the Wings
by David Collison
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