

ALD # FOCUS

The Journal of the Association of Lighting Designers

"More art, less tools..."

Joining the ALD



*'Godfather Death' at the New Wimbledon Studio.
Lighting by the Michael Northen Bursary runner-up
Fridthjofur Thorsteinsson. Director: Benjamin Webb.
Costume Designer: Bek Palmer.*

In Focus



Focus magazine is one of the key points of regular contact for members of the ALD, with news of lighting projects from a designer's point of view; items that are of professional interest, reports from our executive about ALD activities and lots of features, such as book reviews, and national press critics reviewing recent lighting designs.

Published every two months, *Focus* aims to keep all members of the ALD up to date with key issues in lighting which affect them. In past editions we have covered subjects including: describing the creative design process for drama, designing for children's theatre, creating designs for a major ballet production, lighting more modest shows at The Minack Theatre, Bingley Little Theatre and the Edinburgh Fringe, lighting in the style of the Victorians, lighting churches, and illuminating Sydney Harbour Bridge.

We keep up with the times when we explore the design implications of being green in an energy-efficient theatre. Interviews with leading lighting designers have given an insight to the creative process including their choice of colours. Professional articles have discussed how to become an assistant

or associate lighting designer and we have given advice on photographing your work. We also keep professional designers up to date with what is happening with contracts, fees, and Equity.

Student interests are covered through articles on education from course leaders and advice from our student rep. We are proud to enlist the services of a prominent theatre, ballet or opera critic in each issue of *Focus* to provide us with an appreciation of some recent lighting designs.

Focus is a major part of the ALD mission of keeping lighting practitioners and supporters in touch with each other and the feedback from members is that it is always a good read! 🌟

Rick's Reception

"If you are interested in lighting design you will be interested in joining the Association of Lighting Designers," says award-winning lighting designer and ALD Chairman, Rick Fisher

Welcome to this special edition of *Focus*, introducing you to the activities of the Association of Lighting Designers. The ALD is reckoned to be the largest professional body of lighting practitioners in the world. While the majority of our members specialise in lighting design for the performing arts and live events we welcome members from all areas of the lighting industry who want to be in contact with what lighting designers are thinking and doing. The organisation is proud to boast as members most of the working lighting designers in the UK and we have many international members.

The ALD hosts many meetings. We have those

related to shows where designers discuss the choices they have made and their approaches to lighting a particular piece. Also, our members are often invited to our corporate members' premises to give feedback on products and services. The ALD does everything it can to promote networking and contact between members which is so important in our profession.

The ALD is also very involved in representing lighting designers' interests to our union, Equity, through strong representation on the Equity Designers' Committee.

We have become increasingly involved in trying to improve the fees and conditions for LDs. We

can and do encourage the sharing of useful information about terms of employment, fees and bad situations when they occur. We can help you contact people who can share experience on the developing your career, tips as you move on and friendly advice if you need to deal with a difficult situation.

Also the ALD supports the charity *Light Relief*, which offers emergency support for those of us in the lighting industry who have fallen on hard times. For more information check out www.lightrelief.org.uk

Membership of the ALD includes free entrance to PLASA and ABTT tradeshows, free subscription to *Lighting & Sound International* and *Entertainment Technology*

magazines. Members also have access to a range of discounted products and services.

The chief aims of the ALD are to increase the interaction of lighting designers and to enhance the profile of lighting design throughout our industry and with our creative colleagues and producers.

We hope that you join us – there is a category of membership for everyone whether active designer, lighting professional, interested supporter or supplier.

Regards, Rick #



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Office Oracle

In *Focus*, our treasurer and administrator, lighting designer Ian Saunders, provides a round-up of the latest news, member benefits and meetings. For this special edition, Ian offers some details on membership and how to apply.

Joining the Association

Associate membership is open to all, whilst Professional Designer, Professional Member and Student memberships have specific entry requirements. Corporate membership is available for companies in the lighting industry, and offers access to the most highly targeted database of UK lighting professionals available. We also offer membership for Non-Profit Organisations, particularly educational establishments, so they can hold ALD publications and information for the public or students to refer to.

Advantages of ALD Membership

Lighting designers seldom work with other lighting

designers. A principal purpose of the ALD is to provide a forum for LDs to meet each other and discuss their art and issues affecting their working lives.

Members' meetings take the form of show briefings, where an LD will discuss the lighting design for a show they have lit with demonstrations in the theatre; product demonstrations by leading manufacturers; master classes with leading practitioners and professional forum meetings where issues of the day can be discussed.

The annual ALD Yearbook provides a directory of members as well as invaluable practical information that every lighting designer needs to hand. The ALD website at www.ald.org.uk

reflects and expands upon these publications, offers a kaleidoscope of pictures of members designs with many links to other sites of interest to the LD.

The ALD represents members' interests in most negotiating environments. ALD members sit on the Equity Designers' Committee (the union group that negotiates lighting design fees and contracts with the TMA, SOLT and ITC). The ALD also provides a neutral intermediary in disputes between lighting designers and managements, offering advice and information based on a wealth of professional experience. 🍷

office@ald.org.uk
www.ald.org.uk

Membership FAQs

What types of membership are available?

There are five main membership categories in the ALD:

Professional Designer

For those professionally and actively engaged in lighting design for the theatre, performing arts, associated industries and lighting design education who are contracted and earn fees from lighting design from all scales and types of project.

Professional Member

For those actively working in the theatre, live entertainment and associated industries professionally *but not specifically as lighting designers*. This includes for example programmers, production electricians, educators, those working for lighting companies, freelance or resident electric theatre staff, theatre consultants and projection designers.

The fee for both professional categories is £75 for all the standard ALD benefits **plus voting rights, exclusive professional email briefings and invitations to professional member meetings**. Applicants are requested to provide a detailed biography with details of recent shows.

Associate

Open to any individual interested in the design of lighting (for theatre, live entertainment and associated industries). The fee is £40, and you receive the standard ALD benefits.

Student

For any individuals who are studying on a course with some lighting elements. A member may only continue as a student for five years. Proof of student status is required. The fee is £25, and each autumn term we have a sponsorship scheme for Higher education students to sign up for free membership paid for by our corporate members. All students receive the standard ALD benefits plus invitations to student meetings.

Corporate

Open to companies that have an interest in lighting, lighting designers and the lighting profession. The annual fee is £400 for which you receive all the standard ALD benefits plus extra copies of *Focus*, access to 700+ potential customers and opinion formers through mailings, press releases and news on our website exclusive advertising opportunities in *Focus*, and the ability to talk directly to our members.

How do I apply?

If there isn't a form with this special issue of *Focus*, visit our website www.ald.org.uk and download the PDF version.

P... for PROFESSIONALS

Lighting designer Mark Jonathan is our Rep for Professional designers and Professional Members, and he is deeply involved in the issues affecting professionals in the lighting world.



I hope that this special edition of *Focus* will help persuade you to join the ALD and join together in advancing the profession of lighting design

I have a column in *Focus* as the Professionals' rep on the ALD Executive. I usually have some crazy adventures to report but with my personal exploits as a lighting designer there are always some professional issues that we want to bring to the attention of members.

Frankly, if you are working as a lighting designer, programmer or involved in a professional design role in anyway, it's essential that you belong to the ALD. We are a much stronger association if all the working LDs belong. While we do not intend to

replace Equity as your official union we have mounted a number of initiatives that have either raised the profile of lighting design or improved the professionals' circumstances.

By combining the input of members and their agents we have developed the *ALD Contract Rider* which ensures that all things an LD might need, apart from a fee, are considered in the agreement which precedes a design engagement - from billing to travel expenses.

Another significant initiative was the ALD letter to producers where for the first time the ALD directly took action on behalf of LDs as a whole to encourage theatre producers to examine whether lighting

fees were sufficient in their organisations.

The ALD members on the Equity Designers' Committee discuss and drive through action on fees and other issues which protect the interests of LDs.

The ALD is continuously developing and expanding a network of LDs who exchange information on fees and a database that will enable delicate contractual information to be shared amongst members without breaching the confidentiality of any individual. We make this information available on a needs basis to members who contribute to the database. By this means success in contract negotiation and problem resolution can be shared, strengthening the

consistency of members' dealings with producing managements. This ongoing activity will inevitably help to strengthen our position and help ensure that the industry profile of lighting designers is continually raised. #



The opera 'Gianni Schicchi' in LA. Directot: Woody Allen. Lighting by Mark Jonathan.

'Peter and the Wolf' by In The Wings productions, on tour in Europe and the UK in 2008. Lighting by David W. Kidd. Photo ©2008 In The Wings.



Lighting Design Feature Articles

Here's a taste of some of the articles on the art of lighting that we have featured recently.

Peter and the Wolf (left)

Lighting designer David W. Kidd described his design for this international ballet tour... *Dec 08/Jan 09*

He's Behind You!

ALD Executive member and lighting designer Will Evans explained the trials, tribulations and joy of lighting children's theatre. Lighting for kids? You must be joking. The standards are high, very high.... *Feb 07*

Hitting the Big Time! **Associate and Assistant Lighting Designers**

John Leventhall researched the role of the Associate and Assistant Lighting Designers in the UK. Big scale productions need Associate LDs as the role of the LD has expanded. Why Do LDs And Productions Need Associates? What is an Associate Lighting Designer? How Do LDs And Associates Work Together?

What Qualities Make A Good Associate LD? How Can you Become An Associate LD? How Do Associate LDs Get Paid? What Do Associate LDs Get Paid? What's the Future for Associate LDs? Where Can I Get Advice? John followed this with a similar review of the role of an assistant LD... *Dec 06, Apr 07*

Patience at Normansfield

The ALD's own antique lighting design authority, James Laws, appraised us of how Victorian shows were lit. This was no academic thesis. James was commissioned to reproduce the lighting from the original Savoy Theatre production of Gilbert & Sullivan's *Patience* using equipment of the period... *Apr 07*

'On the Waterfront'

From Nottingham Playhouse to London's West End (via Edinburgh) Steven Berkoff's

dramatic play demanded dramatic lighting and LD Mike Robertson explained his techniques... *June/July 08*

Whatever the producers want!

LD Johanna Town found herself lighting two different

shows in London at the same time but with diametrically opposed lighting demands from the producers. An energy efficient 5kW limit in North London, and demands for brighter in the West End... *Feb/March 09*

Thoughts on 'Death of a Salesman'
Lighting is not only about grand operas and the West End. Richard Thompson provided some thoughts on lighting an amateur production at the Bingley Little Theatre... *Oct/Nov 08* #



Steven Berkoff's 'On the Waterfront' at Nottingham Playhouse. Lighting by Mike Robertson.

Meetings – “Getting to know you...” Here’s a taste of what to expect

Exploring Digital Scenography

The ALD held its first ever forum event on Digital Scenography. The event aimed to explore the world of projected image and how this ever increasing field of technology is affecting today’s theatre practitioner....

VectorWorks Workshop

We’ve had a Vector Works training seminar with Alex Wardle at the Young Vic in London. Alex has been using VectorWorks’s design software for many years now and knows it well from a lighting designer’s point of view. It also proved to be a great meeting opportunity for professional LDs...

Organum ad Libitum

At Rose Bruford College, Nick Hunt hosted a fascinating time-warp back to post-war Britain when the theatre industry was undergoing

seismic changes in funding, style, management, buildings and lighting equipment. Enter the Light Console plus a little modern MIDI rewiring...

Design in practice

ALD members have enjoyed Mark Jonathan talking about the trials and tribulations of lighting *Nicholas Nickleby* in rep at Chichester Festival Theatre; James Whitside taking a look at the transfer of *Footloose* from tour to West End; Ken Billington describing his lighting for *The Drowsy Chaperone* at the Novello theatre in London; and Paul Pyant and David Howe on the lighting for *The Lord Of The Rings*. These meetings allow members to really get inside the design process of another lighting designer and are very popular.

Rosco Professionals’ Lunch

ALD professional members

were invited to attend a lunch arranged by corporate member Rosco. The only thing asked for in return was a chat to various Rosco staff about our current use of colour, gobos and moving or

animation effects and to offer thoughts on what we think the future may hold for us.

Philip Norfolk – Professional development – Selling Yourself
Philip Norfolk provided an

overview of how lighting designers can help themselves in their hunt for work by adopting basic techniques used by corporate sales departments in companies across the world... #



Students, Focus and the ALD

By Nick Moran, Senior Lecturer in Lighting Design and Production
Lighting and practising lighting designer

As a teacher of lighting for performance, I think all students interested in lighting should become members of the ALD. And if you are studying lighting full time at an institution that is a member of the Conference of Drama Schools you can enjoy sponsored ALD student membership for at least two years of your program of study.

The most tangible part of student membership is *Focus*. Put simply, it provides some of the best writing about and by working lighting designers available in this country and some significant tips for those starting out in

lighting. *Focus* has featured articles on ways into the profession, and from young LDs working on their first big shows. There are notes from “big name” LDs on what they expect from an assistant, articles written by students, and interviews based on questions submitted by students.

Recent articles on photography and on marketing, written by people working in performance lighting, are at least as useful to student practitioners as they are to seasoned professionals. *Focus* provides insights into the people and practice of professional



lighting design. It covers the kinds of shows many students may aspire to get a placement as assistant.

Membership of the ALD entitles you to subscriptions to other journals where you can read all about that too. *Focus* has articles from real world lighting designers working with the kind of

equipment students use in their schools and colleges, and is one of the few places where you can see good quality photographs of performance lighting

ALD membership gives important opportunities for networking events both with other students, with key suppliers to the

entertainment industry and with those all important current working LDs.

So, if you are studying lighting design for performance, join the ALD as a first step into the professional community. #

GUEST REVIEWS

For each issue we ask a theatre, dance or opera critic to share their views of lighting...

Gavin Roebuck
writes for 'The Stage'

"Matthew Bourne and his New Adventures company transformed one of ballet's best-loved stories into a contemporary gay slanted tale with extravagant designs by Lez Brotherston that are exceptionally well lit by Rick Fisher who imaginatively manages different shades of moonlight on the most interesting scenes in the dance work, those with the male ensemble as a flock of enchanted and menacing fowl with swanlike gestures."

"Coming up in the Spring with the Covent Garden Royal Ballet... Frederick Ashton's *Rhapsody* ably lit by Neil Austin".

"Hugh Vanstone artistically lit the dancers and the sets creating the perfect mood, which may linger longer in the memory than the pleasing, though bland, choreography."

Ash Khandekar
Editor of 'Opera Now'

"Sometimes, I don't notice lighting in the opera house. Perhaps that's a positive thing, an instance of how good lighting acts primarily on the subconscious, illuminating the subtext of a work in absolute harmony with the music.

"Sometimes, however, lighting takes centre stage in the opera, and for me the supreme example of this came at the end of Glyndebourne's *Tristan und Isolde*. Robin Carter traces every flicker of emotion in Nikolaus Lehnhoff's hypnotic production of Wagner's masterpiece with a luminosity that is spellbinding at the start and by the end becomes almost spiritual, as Isolde's transfiguration from life to death becomes a metaphysical transformation from being into pure, unadulterated light. Magic."

Michael Coveney
Theatre critic of 'The Observer'

"It is an entirely true adage that the actors you can't see properly you don't hear properly.

"Unless, of course, the "not seeing properly" is part of the idea, as it was in Marianne Elliott's brilliantly integrated production of *Therese Raquin* at the National, where the shadowy lighting of Neil Austin not only caught, as Alastair Macaulay said in the Financial Times, "the changes of daylight, lamplight and surreal conscience" but also defined the sensuality of the heroine – Charlotte Emmerson was picked out, bathing, in a golden nimbus – and the disastrous wedding night of the guilty lovers snapped in a long series of sickly green freeze frames."

Susannah Clapp
Theatre critic of 'The Observer'.

"A few years ago, when extolling the work of one designer to a colleague, I was met with the objection that 'you can't see what he's doing'. A complaint which was the best of recommendations.

"As well as such legerdemain naturalism, there have been swooping spectacular moments. In Emma Rice's much debated *A Matter of Life and Death*, Mark Henderson created a universe of extraordinary morphing effects. In the opening moments he managed to turn the stage into something which seemed to go on forever: a midnight-blue bowl of smoky space, like a fallen sky, flecked with lights that looked like stars but which turned out to belong to a fleet of advancing bicycles. Henderson caught the desolation.. in a still grey light."

Dominic Cavendish
Theatre critic at the 'Daily Telegraph'

"In Colchester in a stirring revival of RC Sherriff's World War I drama *Journey's End* at the Mercury, Hansjörg Schmidt gave us about as little lighting to go on as you'd ever expect to find in a major rep theatre.

"The set presented an elongated narrow ridge of action - above which loomed a vast skyscape of cloud and darkness, alleviated only by a few splashes of fantastical colour, as the trench Tommies' flares did their work.





























"The waning of light equated in a direct, visceral way with the snuffing out of frail young lives."

[see facing photo]



'Journey's End' at the Mercury, Colchester. Lighting by Hansjörg Schmidt. Photograph: Robert Day.

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