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THE LIVERPOOL INSTITUTE FOR PERFORMING ARTS



A sound future

Adam Miller's work has a guaranteed audience of millions.

The Sound Technology graduate is a music assistant engineer for the world-renowned AIR Lyndhurst studios in London. He has been there since 2008 and has so far worked on projects for Hans Zimmer, Danny Elfman, George Michael, Nick Cave and Sting.

He loves the job, "It's great to know you're working in one of the best places in the world. That in itself attracts some of the best people, on both sides of the glass, so it's a real education in engineering and music. I get to watch some of the best musicians in the world, playing music from some of the best composers, day in, day out."

George Martin, who was the producer of The Beatles, founded the AIR studio brand in 1969, setting up AIR Lyndhurst in 1992. Some of the studio's major music clients include Universal, Sony and EMI.

Adam, who is originally from Kent, graduated from LIPA in 2007.

He explains what his job involves; "I could be setting the room up for an orchestra, running ProTools, editing takes or making backup files to send around the world to composers and engineers. I also work out equipment layouts for clients and sometimes I engineer vocal and songwriting sessions."

It's a heavy workload for the 23-year-old, who says it's unusual if he gets home before midnight.

"There's an enormous amount to learn. Recording orchestras can be an expensive business, so getting that kind of experience is essential. I'm lucky that AIR Lyndhurst is one of the few places left with a kind of engineering hierarchy, so there's an acceptance from the older engineers of the need to train the younger ones on the job."

Adam hopes to stay in the industry for as long as he can, saying there's nowhere better to be for the variety and quality of the work.



From the West End

to Weatherfield

The journey from the West End to the cobblestones of Britain's favourite TV street has fulfilled 1998 Performing Arts (Dance) graduate Rachel Leskovic's ultimate career ambition.

Back in 1999 when she was nominated for an Olivier Award for her West End debut in *Spend, Spend, Spend*, Rachel aspired to one day appear in *Coronation Street*. Now she is making her mark in the top-rated ITV soap in

the role of hairdresser Natasha Blakeman.

Natasha first appeared on our screens in May last year. Recent episodes have brought dramatic storylines for her character. Natasha likes a good time and had been on the look-out for a new man in her life. She thought she had found him in suave businessman Tony Gordon, but the couple recently split over his growing friendship with Natasha's colleague Maria. *(continued on page 3)*

A WICKED role

Acting graduate Natalie Anderson has landed a dream role in the international hit musical *WICKED*, in London's West End.

Since May, Natalie has been playing the character of Nessarose. She describes the role: "Nessarose is the sister of the leading lady, Elphaba. She's quite spoilt and after a bad love experience declares herself the Wicked Witch of the East."

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Natalie with fellow cast member on stage in *WICKED*



Land Rover drives musical success

For musician Jon Allen, securing a television commercial deal with Land Rover, was just the ticket to launching his musical career on the global stage.

Jon's single *Going Home* was last year chosen by the British car manufacturer as the theme music behind the advert for its new Freelander model. The Performing Arts (Music) graduate describes how it happened:

"I'd just signed up with a new producer to make my album, he had contacts in the advertising industry and had heard on the grapevine that Land Rover was looking to sign up an artist, my music was put forward and I was lucky enough to secure the contract."

That deal has helped to set Jon up for a bright future. He adds, "Everything's just snowballed since the Land Rover advert, I now get my songs heard on the radio and more people than ever are noticing me."

Since graduating from LIPA in 2002 Jon, who is originally from Devon, has also had the privilege of working as a support artist for KT Tunstall and Jose Gonzalez, including performing at the Wembley Arena. He's been on a UK tour for the first part of 2009, but has also found time to release a new single *In Your Light* which was played on BBC Radio 2 during March and April.

In late May, Jon appeared on the BBC 2 programme, *Later...with Jools Holland*, performing an exclusive acoustic version of his new song, *Dead Man's Suit*, just days before the release of his debut album with the same title as the single.

He is well aware of how important the Land Rover advertisement has been to build on his success even further.

"The music industry is now all about commercial success, everyone's concentrating on getting an advertising or film deal. That's where the money is and where the contacts are."

Jon may have a few interesting publishing deals lined up for the future and although he can't give us the details yet, he will be one to watch.

Sound and vision

Producing design specifications for recording rooms and creating videos may be exactly the type of projects that a Sound Technology graduate would expect to do: Tomer Kantor does all this and more, but in a rather different setting from a traditional recording studio. Changing technology opens up new career avenues for graduates every day and Tomer works as a designer, producer and engineer for BPP Professional Education, a leading provider of training for professional qualifications.

He tells us about his role: "My work involves e-learning development and adding audio-visual enhancements to training materials. I travel to various cities around the UK, working on video and audio design specs. I also produce automated audio recordings and video commercials for the 34 different companies that are part of BPP, which can involve working out on location, such as the video I made recently at a mansion in Bath."

Tomer, who hails from Israel, was lucky enough to start his job with BPP within three weeks of graduating last summer. He explains: "One of the most important things that I got from studying at LIPA was an understanding of the link between the corporate world and the sound world, this helped me to promote myself in a professional way and get this job so soon after graduation."

Creatively tackling at-risk youth

Helping to shape an angry young man into a future leader is just part of the job for Community Arts graduate, Emma-Jane Trivett, who is known as EJ. Since graduating from LIPA, she has worked with at-risk youth and young offenders to develop their creative and life skills.

"There is a point when you're working with these young people, which I describe as the 'penny drop moment', when someone who has been screaming and swearing for weeks suddenly starts to feel vulnerable. They begin to realise that someone trusts them and believes in them. This is the moment I love, it's the moment that pays you way more than any salary ever will."

EJ is currently an Associate Director for Y-Touring, an operation of the Central YMCA. She works with the local community in London to develop a programme of participatory work for the national theatre company, which tours around the UK.

Since leaving LIPA in 2004, EJ has also worked in Sri Lanka on a Playback Theatre project with tsunami survivors and in India, training teachers to use theatre as a language learning tool.

When she returned to the UK, EJ took up a role with Immediate Theatre in Hackney, working on productions with young people who had or were at risk of offending, or at risk of being socially or educationally excluded. She adds: "This role was really formative for me. One particular site specific production onboard a warship in Canary Wharf blew my mind and our audience was left in tears...which I took as a major success for those kids!"

Alongside her current work with Y-Touring in London, EJ, who is originally from Leicester, has also been developing her own new social enterprise. She hopes the organisation, called Harvest, will be fully up and running by the end of this year.

"The project will deliver workshops for young offenders and young people who are at risk of underachieving, to address some of the barriers they face and helping them to engage in education, employment or training," says the 26-year-old.

"I feel that with anti-social behaviour on the rise in the current financial climate, especially in inner city environments, that inspiring training, legal income and creativity will have the necessary impact on these young people's lives," said EJ.



EJ is pictured second right delivering a training course with participants from Kings Cross for Y-Touring

A popular job for Pino



2005 Management graduate Pino Pumilia works alongside some of the best in the business. He is EMI Publishing's pop A&R Manager and is in charge of managing the EMI writers. That also sees him working with EMI Publishing's artist roster, which includes Amy Winehouse, Scissor Sisters, Girls Aloud, Arctic Monkeys, Duffy, Calvin Harris and Sam Sparro. He loves the job, saying it's fantastic to be paid to listen and talk about music all day long.

"It's my job to nurture our writers, make sure they are working with the best artists and are on the right projects. The second part of my job involves finding new pop acts with amazing potential that are looking for a good publishing home to help them grow as artists," said the 27-year-old.

When he left LIPA in 2005, Pino began working for Modest!

Management, which manages the careers of Leona Lewis, Alexandra Burke and JLS. "As a music manager, you need to be on the job 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You're expected to be across everything from the making of an album to marketing, promotion and tours."

"I think I've gained a bit of a reputation for being a pop guy when it comes to music. When the people at EMI got in touch about working with them as their pop A&R manager, it seemed like a great opportunity, so I started here as soon as I had finished the *X Factor* tour."

Pino, who is from Watford, looks back on his time at LIPA with fondness. "I always recommend LIPA to anyone that asks. I regularly come into contact with fellow LIPA alumni through work, which can only be a testament to the success of the course."

From the West End to Weatherfield



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This may turn out to be a lucky escape from Tony. Little does Natasha know that under that sharp suit beats the heart of a villain, who will stop at nothing to get what he wants, even murder.

Rachel, who is married to fellow graduate David Tench, was happy that her character was developed slowly, as it was her first job after the birth of baby Macy. She tells us: "The slow burn process allows the writers to see what the actor brings to the character and write for them, not to mention time for the actor to get over the fact they are part of a British institution. To be sat having tea in the green room, whilst waiting to go on set, amongst TV legends, chatting about what we've been up to over the weekend whilst dunking a custard cream is too surreal for words..."



When you turn up for work and drive on to the cobbles, it's like you're in your own little community, like a bubble and every one there is incredibly passionate about what they do, to try and make something special and give the audience what they want. *Coronation Street* is a great place for any actor to work."

Setting up Big Brother

Helping to create the sets of hit shows like *Big Brother's Big Mouth* has given Theatre and Performance Design graduate, Adrian Gee, the exposure he needs to build on his career.

"I've worked as a scenic painter and an art assistant on four *Big Brother's Big Mouth* sets now, including the 2007 *Celebrity Big Brother* involving Jade Goody and Shilpa Shetty, where I helped to create antique furniture and developed the house into a prison and paradise set. I've worked with some brilliant designers, made loads of contacts and as the programme is so successful, it's a great platform for many people to see my work."

Since leaving LIPA in 2006, Adrian has also worked on sets in live theatre and television. Last year he was a design assistant for the National Television Awards.

"I get such a kick from working on live performances, the NTAs were fantastic to work on, and it is always a challenge working on live events and entertainment parties."

The 24-year-old from East London has worked on a number of magazine shoots, helping with props and studio work. Some of the magazines he has worked for include the *ID Britain's Top Models* feature, and a photo-shoot with Emma Watson for *Teen Vogue*.

Adrian is currently working on the set of a new BBC switch show, *Winging It* and is Art Director on the new BBC 3 programme, *Don't Get Screwed*.

"I've been really lucky to work with so many different people, from crew to celebrities; they're all there for one purpose, to put on a great show. Live theatre is my passion, whilst television work provides different challenges and opens up many more opportunities."





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Since *WICKED* opened at London's Apollo Victoria Theatre in 2006, it has taken in more than £70 million at the Box Office and almost two million people have seen the show.

Natalie had four weeks of rehearsals to get up to speed with the musical and to get to know her sixteen new cast members. She says it has been a learning curve, "My character is in a wheelchair, so that can be quite a challenge to work with on stage."

Since graduating from LIPA in 2003, the 27-year-old has worked in both television and film. After working on ITV's *The Royal*, as Nurse Stella Davenport for three and a half years, Natalie scored a role in the film, *Freight*, with Billy Murray, earlier this year. Live theatre is always something she has wanted to get into.

"Working in front of a camera is totally different to my role in *WICKED*. On camera, you have to be contained and are often trying to conserve your energy. In the theatre, you really have to boost your energy levels so the whole auditorium knows what you're doing."

In between her film and TV commitments, Natalie also released her album, *Return to Me*, last year. "I'm really proud of the album, it's sold really well and I hope its profile might be raised even further following my role in *WICKED*", said Natalie.

You can see Natalie playing the role of Nessarose until March 2010. After that she has further plans, "I would really like to try my hand at acting in Los Angeles before I have a family. That might be something I pursue following *WICKED*, or I may continue to focus on musical theatre and films."

From village halls to Broadway



Claire performing in *The Hired Man*

In early 2008, Acting graduate Claire Sundin was playing the role of Emily in *The Hired Man* in village halls around England. Fast-forward a couple of months and she was performing in New York, while also being nominated for a prestigious theatre award.

"We were just a small theatre company, taking *The Hired Man* to rural towns. It got really good reviews so we took it to the *Brits Off Broadway* season in New York for eight weeks, which was amazing. One day we were performing in a little village hall, the next minute we were in Central Park."

The 29-year-old wasn't the only LIPA influence in the production, in fact there were four other graduates who were involved in the play. They included Musical Director, Richard Reeday (Performing Arts Music 2003) and actors Katie Howell (Acting 2004), Stuart Ward (Acting 2005) and David Stothard (Acting 1998).

Claire says the LIPA connection was fantastic: "I didn't know any of the LIPA alumni beforehand but it was very easy to work with a bunch of people who had the same training as me. They were easy to get on with, especially when you're

spending 12 hours a day in a van together!" The LIPA-strong cast also released a recording of the album *The Hired Man* to coincide with the New York run.

Claire's performance of Emily obviously impressed those in the industry, as not long after returning to England she discovered that she had been nominated for a TMA Theatre Award, which recognises nationwide excellence in theatre. She was up against Helena Blackman and Martin Ball, for Best Performance in a Supporting Role in a Musical at the awards ceremony in October last year.

"I was utterly shocked by the nomination, unfortunately I didn't win, but it was fantastic to be up against actors of such high calibre and to attend the awards ceremony. The nomination has certainly helped get my foot into doors, including auditions for the West End."

This year Claire has been performing in *The Snow Queen* in Cardiff while also preparing for a cabaret show she has created, alongside LIPA graduate Katie Foster-Barnes (Acting 2001), entitled *Next Please*, which opened in London in late June.

With a little help from my friends

Pianist, producer, musical director and photographer: Pete Watson is something of a renaissance man. Not least amongst his many talents is his ability to network. Pete tells us: "The best parts of the job for me are the travelling – I've been to Moscow, China, LA and New York, amongst other places – and meeting other musicians. Everywhere I go I seem to come across other LIPA graduates, the V Festival is packed with familiar faces! In fact now I come to think of it, LIPA pretty much made my career."

2005 Music graduate Pete plays piano for violinist Vanessa Mae, recently performing to sell out stadiums in Eastern Europe, after an introduction by management graduate Matt Vines. He also acted as MD for Natasha Bedingfield when Natasha's regular MD, 1998 Music graduate David Tench, took time out to tour with Take That. He says: "I'm a very big believer in treating every project you do as professionally as possible – whether it's a function,

rehearsal, favour for a mate or a world tour – it's all your reputation at the end of the day and you're only as good as your last gig! I think this is probably the reason a lot of LIPA friends have passed work my way, because I try to make them feel that, if they do, then it will be safe in my hands and they don't need to worry about putting their own reputation on the line." Other artists Pete has worked with include Lily Allen, Simon Webbe and Sia (Zero 7).

Pete, from Wigan, has recently moved to London. He hopes this will open up new opportunities, aiming to work as a Musical Director in the West End. With his own recording studio, Meadowcroft Studio, and a recently launched service photographing gigs and live events, he is aiming to make himself recession-proof, which shouldn't be too difficult with a little help from his friends. (<http://www.petewatson.com/>)



Anchor job is not for lightweights

When we sit down to watch the TV news, it's easy to imagine the presenter just turns up, reads the stories in front of them and goes home. But 2005 Diploma in Performing Arts (Song) graduate Heyling Chan can testify that this is definitely not the case. Heyling, a News Anchor for Hong Kong's ATV News network, starts her day at 10.00am and writes news scripts, gathers information and edits reporters' work until 7.30pm, when the news goes on air.

Once she gets in the studio reading the news is usually straight forward - but not always. She tells us: "The most interesting part is when something breaks, and I have no choice but to react. It's difficult to keep a straight face when someone's yelling something in your earpiece and you don't precisely know what's going on. Once, I was on air and a woman who had been on life support, after

falling off a cliff, had died while I was 10 seconds away from having to read her story. I ended up having to scramble for the facts that I already had and telling viewers at home the latest information I got without appearing like it was an emergency. It was very nerve-wracking."

Presenting is hard work, but it does have a glamorous side. Heyling was one of the hosts of the most recent *Mr World* Competition, held in 2007 in China's tropical island resort of Sanya. Being surrounded by handsome, scantily clad hunks was just one of the perks of the job. Heyling says: "I was basically given a free pass on shopping for any dresses I wanted from some of the most top-end brands in the world and it was all paid for. I also never thought I'd get a free trip to Sanya, even though it was extremely hard work. Rehearsals lasted from about six in the morning until about one or two am the next day, everyday for two weeks before the actual live production."



Heyling is currently studying for a Masters degree in International and Public Affairs, with a view to becoming a diplomat. But she doesn't ever want to let go of her news presenting role, and if the call came to present *Mr World* again she would definitely be interested – it's a tough job, but someone's got to do it.



Laura pictured far right with *Fame Games* hosts

When Music graduate, Laura Krier, was desperately searching for words to write a pitch for a new radio show, *Fame Games*, early one morning in December 2007 she randomly came across an online blogger offering advice. Luckily, for Laura that blogger turned out to be the newly appointed Vice President of ABC Radio Networks in the United States.

The radio show, which Laura describes as the *American Idol* for radio, is dedicated to discovering the next big radio hit. "It's a daily radio show and competition where fans and reviewers go online to vote for and review the songs submitted."

Laura, who is originally from South Dakota in the USA, and her business partner, Paul Sedkowski set up the concept of *Fame Games* from their base in Spain in 2004. They were feeling the pressure to make the radio show a success.

"When we were discovered by Dave Van Dyke from ABC Networks, everything changed. After more than two years of pitching the show, people were now scrambling over themselves to put money in. The website started crashing daily from the number of hits

and we had to expand our twice-weekly show into a daily production. Our staff numbers grew from two to ten within six weeks. It was an exciting time, especially when Dave came to visit the studios. It goes down in my memoirs as the most exciting time in my life... ever!"

ABC, which has more than four and a half thousand radio affiliates, has signed a three-year contract with *Fame Games*. Since its inception, more than 3.5 million people in over 204 countries have logged on to the *Fame Games* website.

"*Fame Games* is doing for independent and self-releasing musicians what *American Idol* and *X-Factor* have been doing for karaoke singers. The best part of the job is helping the indie musicians, who are so crushed by corporate power and greed", said Laura.

There is still some way to go for Laura and *Fame Games* as she tries to reach her aim of syndicating the show into 140 countries. In the last few months Tony Cowell, brother of *Britain's Got Talent* host, Simon Cowell, has started hosting a weekend show on *Fame Games*. "Thanks to Cowell Media coming on board, ABC has just secured UK distribution and we hope to be blaring out on Liverpool radio very soon!"

Lucky strike for Liz

Strike Dance and Production was only established in October 2008, but has already made its mark in the music, sports, TV and corporate entertainment industries. The company was founded by 28-year-old Dance graduate Liz Sianni,* she tells us: "I was facilitating lots of dance projects, making great contacts and the workload was getting bigger and better, so it felt the right time to set up my own company."

November saw Strike choreograph and supply dancers for the LIPA graduate group The Wombats. The dancers braved an eight-foot ramp on roller-skates at the Liverpool Arena, before a 15,000 capacity crowd. Dressed in shiny lycra and leg warmers, they performed 80s-style routines to two of the band's tracks including the finale *Backfire at the Disco*.

In February, the crowds at the Sky Sports International Netball Series watched Strike's hip-hop dancers and B Boys perform spectacular tricks and spins at the O2, Sky Dome and Trent FM Arenas. Meanwhile, Liz was also busy choreographing for scenes in the popular Channel 4 soap *Hollyoaks*, where she put together sequences for characters Sarah Barnes and goth teenager Newt, aired in March and June.

Recently, Liz's dancers opened the Liverpool Salsa Festival alongside the World Salsa Champions with their Latin hip-hop fusion work in Liz's home town of Liverpool. She employs dancers on a project by project basis and has worked with a number of LIPA graduates including Emma Egerton (2004), Nandi Bhebhe and Anthony Pendlebury (both 2008) and regularly collaborates with fellow 2001 alumna Rachel Wynn.

*Known as Liz Mapstone at LIPA



Holly's got talent

"No two days are the same in my role, I could be working with the Birmingham Royal Ballet, or helping to organise the Manchester auditions for the 2009 version of ITV's *Britain's Got Talent*," says Management graduate Holly Davidson.

The 22-year-old is the Event Coordinator at The Lowry in Salford. It was a job she picked up immediately after graduating from LIPA in 2008.

"I work through the entire process of putting on an event within a large working theatre. Clients approach The Lowry as a potential venue for their event and it's my job to provide creative ideas of how it could be optimised within the theatre company."

Holly's clients include the BBC, Arts Council England, and North West Vision and Media. She explains the details: "I organise the event, draw up the relevant contracts and organise the final details such as audio visual requirements, the number of guests and any special requests. Bearing in mind I coordinate quite a few individual events, it can be quite a juggling act to keep on top of all the contracts."

Holly says there are challenges that come with working in a large theatre and art gallery. "Often the events side of the business can be overlooked. The programming department therefore gets first refusal on the three theatres for shows and we have to fight for spaces to be used for events."

But there are the upsides as The Lowry is used for a large variety of events; "I recently worked with Talk Back Thames TV and ITV on the programme *Britain's Got Talent* as The Lowry was used as the venue for the 2009 Manchester auditions," said Holly.

She says the practical experience of the management course at LIPA really prepared her for the job: "All that work was directly transferable. Every day I have to deal with contracts, budgets and invoices, all of which I wouldn't have a clue about if it wasn't for my degree!"



Holly with Art and Dec, the presenters of Britain's Got Talent



Flying the members of Girls Aloud over the heads of thousands of their fans is no small task for Theatre and Performance Technology graduate David Jolly. As the touring Motion Control Rigger on the Girls Aloud UK and Ireland tour this summer, the 27-year-old was in charge of transporting the girls and their five male dancers across the crowds.

"I was responsible for a steel and perspex platform, weighing 1,500 kilograms, which was used to move the girls to another, smaller stage in the centre of the arena. It was at a height of only a few metres, over thousands of peoples heads," said the Theatre and Performance Technology graduate.

When David, who lives in North Yorkshire, left LIPA in 2002, he began working as touring lighting crew for bands such as Kings of Leon, Coldplay, Bjork and Alice Cooper. It was a job which also involved working at heights.

"I find that the work at heights is a big part of the appeal of my job.

Climbing 40 odd feet up a caving ladder, onto the truss, in front of 12 thousand people, five minutes before Coldplay hit the stage is not something you get to do in many jobs!"

While he still works as lighting crew, he has also moved into the more specialised area of motion control rigger, working with acts such as Westlife and Keane as well as Girls Aloud. It's a role which focuses on a very particular part of the concert. "For Girls Aloud, for example, I was putting in roughly ten man hours for every 15 minutes that the girls spent travelling on the platform."

David credits LIPA for giving him an advantage over others starting out in the industry. "The opportunity students have there to try their hand at everything is invaluable in my opinion. By having a broad understanding of all technical departments when you graduate, LIPA helps to give you an appreciation of the big picture."

Photos by Damien Taylor

Vanessa's Google experience

30-year-old Management graduate Vanessa Richardson is working right behind the scenes at the worldwide search engine, Google.

Vanessa is an Industry Manager in Google's entertainment team, which also looks after YouTube. She explains her role: "I look after clients such as EA Games, Activision, Universal Pictures, Paramount, Fox, Disney and EMI. I advise them on their digital marketing strategies and devise creative solutions around their releases across our products."

After leaving LIPA in 2001, Vanessa worked for Bauer Media for six years before applying for a job with Google in London. It was a long process that took three months and seven interviews, but she loves it. "Google is a fantastic and inspiring place to work. There are so many bright people here and you learn from everybody you meet. There is a free canteen which is superb and we feel very well looked after as employees."

Vanessa, who is originally from Liverpool, says recent figures show that 27% of people's time in the UK is spent online. "I am very lucky to work with entertainment clients as they are risk takers, highly innovative and always wanting to do things first. I enjoy the creativity of working with the entertainment industry and also being at the heart of what is happening in digital."

Last year Vanessa's role at Google also brought her into contact with the Queen. "I was very nervous meeting her, more so than presenting to hundreds of people. I was waiting for a long time in our canteen and my hands were quite clammy. I am not surprised she wears gloves to shake people's hands. She was very nice and I saw her upload a video onto her channel on YouTube."



Creating a legend



Bettina marbelling set props for Valkyrie

Rebuilding the Greek legend, the Trojan horse for the premiere of the film, *Troy*, has been a career highlight for Theatre and Performance Design graduate, Bettina Scheibe.

The 33-year-old from Germany has worked as a freelance scenic painter, stage designer and illustrator since leaving LIPA in 2000.

"I worked as Head of Painting and Sculpture to restore and rebuild the original horse from the movie *Troy*... we installed it by the harbour in Canakkale in Turkey. At one point I ended up on top of the ladder of a bright red Turkish fire truck to paint the very top of the horse. That was cool!" Bettina has also worked as a scenic painter on the film *Valkyrie*, and last year worked on *Ninja Assassin* at the Babelsberg Film Studios in Germany, the oldest large-scale film studio in the world.

This year she has been working as a production painter for an art film production, *American Night*. She adds, "We shot the film in a western city in a desert-like area in the south of Spain that has been used as a film set since the 1970s."

Bettina also works on a variety of commercial and cultural projects including her own artwork in her Berlin studio. She is now awaiting the autumn release of the film *Pandorum* that she worked on as the Head Set Decoration Painter.

She believes the best part of the varied freelance work is the travel. "It's a big plus if a project takes me abroad and I meet people and see things I normally would not encounter. I especially enjoy the diverse aspect of my occupation. Every project is different, using different skills and techniques, which all help to make me a more valuable and experienced artist." Her work can be viewed on her website www.bettinascheibe.com



Rebuilding the Trojan horse for the film Troy

Running ropes around the circus

Sasha Pomelova is living her dream. Working for *Cirque du Soleil* in Macau, near China, she is responsible for the acrobatic equipment used by the world-renowned circus performers.

The 2007 Theatre and Performance Technology graduate, who was born in Russia, joined the company two years ago and describes it as one of the most interesting experiences in her life.

"It has been my dream to get into *Cirque du Soleil*. Circus has always been my passion, I used to be a performer when I was younger and now I get to apply my experience to make artists safer and more comfortable."

The 24-year-old is based at the Venetian Resort and Casino in Macau. She explains her role: "My main responsibility is to maintain the acrobatic equipment, everything that is rope based. I am the master splicer now. As part of the rigging crew, I also take part in show rescues in the event an aerial artist gets hurt in the air. A few months ago, I also started working on props to make them more show-friendly and safer."

Cirque du Soleil employs nearly four thousand people in more than 40

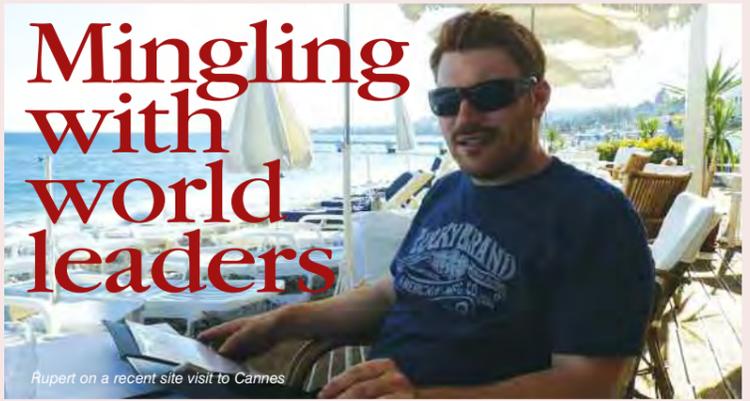


countries around the world and its performances have received a number of awards, including an Emmy.

As well as working on the *Cirque du Soleil* show in Asia, *Zaia*, Sasha also helped to create the performance when it was first being established. "While it was extremely stressful at times, it was also very interesting to be involved with more than 200 very talented, artistic people to create the show," she said.

Sasha has learnt many new skills and gained valuable experience with *Cirque du Soleil*, saying the job has certainly opened many doors for her future.

Mingling with world leaders



Rupert on a recent site visit to Cannes

Through his job as Production Manager for the events company Brand Fuel, 2005 Sound Technology graduate, Rupert Barksfield, has met some very influential people. Former United Nations Secretary, Kofi Annan and Chinese actor Jet Li, just to name a couple.

Brand Fuel has clients such as YouTube and Google. Earlier this year 24-year-old Rupert travelled to Davos, Switzerland, to work with YouTube at the World Economic Forum. He tells us what it was like.

"We built a stand at the forum with loads of computers and video cameras, so we could get the world leaders to speak to the YouTube community via the internet. We got nearly two million viewers, many of whom got the chance to ask questions of more than one hundred world leaders. I also got to meet Kofi Annan, Jet Li and author Paulo Coelho in the process."

Part of his role at Brand Fuel also requires Rupert to work with Kofi Annan's

not for profit organisation, the Global Humanitarian Forum. He loves his work.

"I get to work with really cool clients and some fantastic people, as well as travelling to places. It's a hell of a lot of fun."

While Rupert graduated from the Sound Technology degree, he says his current work proves there are so many career options for LIPA graduates.

"There are a whole host of opportunities, in events, gigging, touring, working in TV, there are so many fields you can work in with a great grounding from LIPA. I have used so many LIPA contacts over the years and the charity festival, Festinho, which I work on every year, is almost solely staffed with LIPA Sound Technology graduates."

Rupert will shortly begin working on the 2009 Festinho event, held in early September. You can check out the festival at www.festinho.com

A blazing success



Naomi and business partner Sean Morris

Juggling fire in the opening performance for Kirklees Council's annual fireworks event

Choreographing fire jugglers and spinners, using specialist fire poi, in front of a crowd of about six thousand people has been one of Naomi Sumner's career highlights so far, after setting up All The Skills in 2008.

The company was formed by the 2005 Community Arts graduate and it won a contract with the Kirklees Council to choreograph last year's *Fire in the Sky* event. For Naomi it was a chance to get involved in a community event.

"We worked with local fire jugglers and spinners of all different levels, including those who had not performed in public before, to create a fire performance as an opening to the Council's annual fireworks event. It was a great experience being able to choreograph a performance using fire in front of so many people."

The 25-year-old set up the company with her friend Sean Morris after working as a freelance dance and drama facilitator for three years after

leaving us.

"I wanted more control over my own work and setting up All The Skills enabled this to happen. Sean and I had a lot of contacts in the industry between us and were able to offer a range of services to all age groups from toddlers to grannies in care homes."

This summer, Naomi has a number of events already on the company's books, including entertaining at the *Prestwich Festival* and helping out-of-work young people in Manchester improve their self-esteem and life skills.

Naomi credits LIPA for the skills she needed to set up her own business. "LIPA gave me the confidence to sell myself and to work in a large variety of settings. The business training on the course was invaluable, I now use those skills I learnt every day."

You can check out Naomi's website at www.alltheskills.co.uk

Rocking it at Rockefeller

Travelling around Norway with some of the country's most well known artists is just all in a day's work for Sound Technology graduate, Einar Norberg.

The 26-year-old freelance Sound Engineer divides his time between working for the most famous concert venue in Norway, the Rockefeller Music Hall in Oslo, and working as a freelance engineer with touring bands.

"Working at Rockefeller is magic and I am really honoured to be there. Most of the bands who tour Europe play here if they come to Norway, so I've worked with a lot of famous local and foreign artists," said Einar.

Last summer the 2006 graduate went on tour with *Norwegian Pop Idol*, as the monitor engineer. He has also worked on the show, *Top 20 VG List*, the Norwegian equivalent to *Top of the Pops*, which involved large outdoor gigs in Norway's four largest cities.

Norwegian-born Einar loves the variety of the job: "I get a kick out of standing behind the sound desk with a packed and satisfied audience in the venue, or at the festival, knowing that I have contributed to giving the audience a great concert experience."

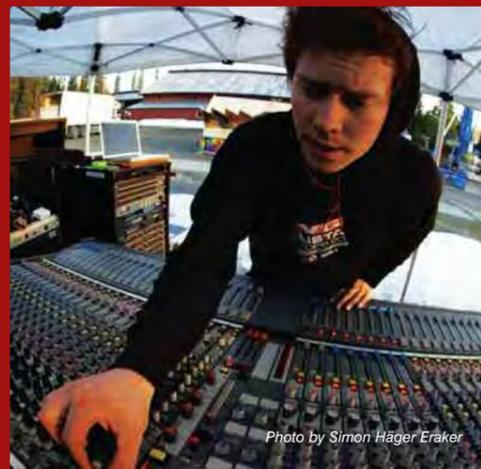


Photo by Simon Häger Eraker

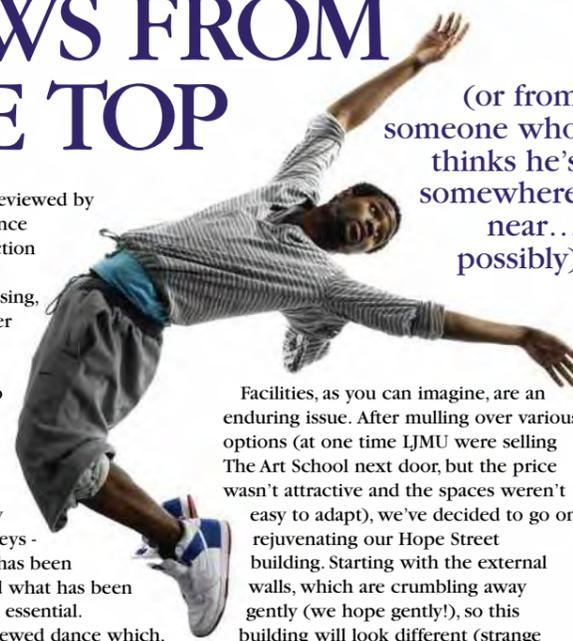
NEWS FROM THE TOP

(or from someone who thinks he's somewhere near... possibly)

Aside from being reviewed by The Quality Assurance Agency (the inspection agency for higher education) and passing, our main focus, over the past two years, has been what I'm now calling 'a deep clean' of the disciplines we teach. Some of you have assisted (thanks for that) by responding to surveys - so we know what has been useful to know and what has been interesting, but not essential.

Last year we reviewed dance which, in the end, was refocused towards commercial/show dance. This year we reviewed acting and that's been reshaped too in the light of employment realities. Both now follow a common timetable. Both actors and dancers also gain supplementary performing skills over two years: acting and singing for our dancers and dancing and singing for our actors. We have also reviewed Personal & Professional Development (now just Professional Development) and Contextual Studies (now just The Context). Over the next two years, other disciplines are being reviewed.

The point, aside from concentrating our attention on aspects of our curricula, is clarity about what we offer (and what we don't offer). We all agree that collaboration is our unique feature - the thing that makes us distinctive. Well, are we *really* living this?



Facilities, as you can imagine, are an enduring issue. After mulling over various options (at one time IJMU were selling The Art School next door, but the price wasn't attractive and the spaces weren't easy to adapt), we've decided to go on rejuvenating our Hope Street building. Starting with the external walls, which are crumbling away gently (we hope gently!), so this building will look different (strange building: ghastly looking outside, but delightful inside). Our future dream is to build six studios in a new building on the corner of Pilgrim and Upper Duke Street. Do you know anyone with spare cash?

These are the main highlights of the year. As you remember, loads of things go on and still go on!

Not really a corporate item, but I've got to share how enduringly heartening it is to hear how you are making your way. For some reason, many of this year's Companions have been connected with graduates. Pippa Ailion has a graduate Natalie Gallacher working for her (graduated 2005); Joe McGann was directed by Jamie Lloyd (graduated 2002) and starred with Lisa Stokke (graduated 1998) and Will Young's MD, when he toured Liverpool, was David Tench (graduated 1998).

All the best, **Mark**

Working royally hard



As an International Executive for PRS for Music, LIPA graduate Oliver Tuercke is in charge of British songwriting royalties from a handful of European countries.

The Management graduate started out as an International Business Analyst with PRS for Music, formerly known as the MCPS-PRS Alliance, when he graduated from LIPA in 2007. The company licences the use of music and pays royalties to the correct right holders when their music is exploited. Oliver explains: "That can happen in a number of ways, when the music is recorded onto any format and distributed to the public, performed or played in public, broadcast or made publicly available online."

"My job as analyst involved providing research and analysis enabling senior management to better understand foreign music markets and royalty receipts from abroad. In my more recent role as International Executive, I am now responsible for PRS for Music's business relations with collecting societies in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and a handful of Eastern European territories."

He adds: "My main objective is to maximise revenue and service levels from those territories, to ensure that our members, which include the world's best composers, music writers and publishers, receive the best possible remuneration for their works being performed abroad."

Oliver says one of the biggest challenges of his job is to hit his year-end revenue target, an eight-digit figure. "Maximising revenue is the ultimate management goal, no matter if you work for a record label, music publisher, promoter or artist management company. I feel this is something that can't be stressed enough."

The 28-year-old, who grew up in Germany, says the best part of his job is working with people from various nationalities. "The international factor is something that I started appreciating at LIPA, with about a third of students coming from abroad. In this role, I've travelled to many places such as Berlin, Munich, Vienna, Prague, Bucharest and Belgrade, to represent the interests of PRS for Music's members."

Chiara starts at the top



Working for stage design luminary Christopher Oram, on sets for West End theatres is something that any rising hopeful in the world of theatre design would be pleased to have on their CV. For Londoner Chiara Stephenson the achievement comes less than a year after she graduated in Theatre and Performance Design.

Chiara, 23, got her lucky break when she met up with fellow design graduate Richard Kent (2007) in a Liverpool bar. He put her in contact with Olivier Award-winning Oram, who was looking for an assistant for an afternoon's work. The afternoon extended into several months working on sets for *Hamlet* and the critically-acclaimed *A View from the Bridge* in the West End,

and making props for *Madame De Sade* (pictured left), with Chiara painting the hand-made fans flourished by a starry cast including Dame Judy Dench and Frances Barber. Chiara tells us: "I've really enjoyed the variety of the work, I've been model making, prop-sourcing, and generally assisting Christopher in whatever way is needed. Working on the sets for *Hamlet* and *A View from the Bridge* and at the Donmar was a great experience."

She has since designed the stage and costumes for a harrowing production of *The Massacre* at The Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmonds, a dark play based on the French revolution; and worked with the young people of the Rogues Gallery Theatre Company at Hoxton Hall. Chiara's aim for the future is to add to her already impressive portfolio by creating more stage designs for bigger productions.



Sasha playing the role of Kelly in *Suspension* at the Bristol Old Vic. Photo by Toby Farrow

From WAG to young mum

Acting graduate Sasha Frost has played a huge variety of roles since leaving LIPA in 2005. Everything from a WAG, to a single mum, to a London party girl.

"I'm about to star in a feature film, *Kick Off*, based on the play of the same name. My character is a very feisty WAG, think Victoria Beckham crossed with Coleen Rooney," said the 24-year-old.

Bristol-born Sasha says her most memorable role was in *Suspension* at the Bristol Old Vic earlier this year. The play was written by Catherine Johnson, who also wrote the hit musical *Mamma Mia!* "Playing young, single mum, Kelly, in that performance was definitely a highlight. The cast was fantastic and it was great being able to come home to Bristol to work in such a historic theatre that was on the brink of closure."

Sasha has also just finished filming a pilot for an online series about fashion and celebrities, in connection with *In Style* magazine. She describes what is involved; "It's a bit like an online soap opera, but it also crosses between reality and fiction. I play a London wild child, who has an extremely spiky and cantankerous sense of humour, which makes everyone a little afraid of her!"

Sasha adds; "I've been really lucky not to be typecast and to be able to play so many diverse roles and accents."

The way we were

We held a reunion for alumni who graduated between 1999 and 2001 in May. Some 36 graduates and guests met up with familiar staff to eat, drink and reminisce. Old graduation footage was shown and there was a chance to tour the building and re-visit the scenes of past triumphs (and maybe the odd disaster). It evoked memories of master classes with industry giants, late nights in the recording studio, and our ghost...



Mark Featherstone-Witty, Natasha Price and her partner



Stefan Kazassoglou and Alexander Nordgaren



Taryn Israelsohn, Zoe Wood, Kavisha Adapen and Maximilian Souchay



Kjell-Ole Haune, Arthur Bernstein, Pete Stormont and Roger Morris



Friends and family with Jane Barrett and David Fox



Terry Cripps, his wife Tracey and Lisa Carver



Rob Flanagan, Jocelyn McMillan, Lyndsay Feltham, Gary Feltham and Richard Barbour



Rachael Baio, Roger Morris and Ema Quinn



Celebrating old times. Thanks so much to everyone who joined us that night.

Musical trio combine for award-winning festival



From left to right: Rob, Djamilia and James

Three former LIPA students have proved they have what it takes to create and organise an award-winning arts and cultural festival in Sweden. Music graduates James Carnell, Rob Coe, who are from England and Swedish-born Djamilia Skoglund-Voss, are now in the final stages of preparing for the 2009 *Dragonfly Festival*, which they describe as a unique event blending art, music, cinema and therapy.

James explains: "We try to involve as many elements of the arts as possible and to encourage artists in the early stages of their career to collaborate together with more established performers."

In its inaugural year in 2008 the festival, which is set in a pre-historic village near Gothenburg in Sweden, won a local award for its high level of organisation.

James says it was much needed encouragement, "It was a real boost. We were very glad to have been recognised for the amount of hard work we put into arranging the event and it spurred us on to getting straight into organising the 2009 festival."

The trio has been playing in their band *Mongo Lounge* since graduating from LIPA in 2005, but, in 2007, they decided to start working on their dream to create a new festival. They officially registered as a company, naming themselves The Hollow Egg, and along with the support of two friends began organising the *Dragonfly Festival*.

This year's festival is scheduled over three days in August and James says it's shaping up to be the best yet. You can check the *Dragonfly Festival* out on www.dragonflyfestival.org

LIPA secures business support for graduates

We have secured a fantastic opportunity for our graduates, who are considering launching their own businesses.

We are one of several North West Universities, involved in a national Enterprise Champions programme, run through the National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship (NCGE) and supported by the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA).

Two LIPA Enterprise Champions, who are also LIPA graduates, Lynne Harrison (Management 2007) and Olivia Du-Monceau (Theatre and Performance Design 2005), have been appointed, to oversee the project. The NW Enterprise Champions offer business support, training and guidance to graduates who need help in launching and developing their business ideas.

"It's a great opportunity, helping people to understand business and offering mentoring in areas such as tax returns and self-promotion," said Olivia Du-Monceau.

Our participation in the Northwest Enterprise Champions Project also encourages us to change our curriculum to include more focus on entrepreneurship and to ensure we become a centre of excellence for coaching and mentoring in the creative sector.

"Graduates who are considering starting up their own business, or those who are self employed, should get in touch with us to find out more about this unique opportunity. They don't have to come to us with a business plan, they just need an idea and we'll help them go from there," said LIPA's Head of Knowledge Transfer, Ged McKenna, who is managing the project.

Funding opportunities for LIPA graduates

Funding is also available to graduates who need support with their business idea, which involves the arts and entertainment industry. All graduates are able to apply for the LIPA Business Development Fund, which would provide them with a business mentor for six months, along with a grant of up to £1,000.

We have also been allocated £38,000, to be distributed in grants of £1,000 per applicant, from the European Capital of Culture 'Year of the Environment 2009'.

Applications for grants are open to graduates, who have an idea for a project, which raises awareness on environmental issues, or benefits the environment and wherever possible encourages the local visitor and tourist economy.

If you would like further information about any of these options, please contact the LIPA Enterprise Champions: Olivia Du-Monceau, on o.du-monceau@lipa.ac.uk or Lynne Harrison, on l.harrison1@lipa.ac.uk

Roll with it

Putting on a series of six different shows, with two performances a night covering a spectrum of dance styles from country to ballroom via a *Hairspray* style *Shimmy!* show keeps 2005 Dance graduate Sarah Brooks on her toes. Add the odd rolling wave into the mix though and it's enough to knock a girl off her feet.

25-year-old Sarah, from Chichester, is Dance Captain for PGT Entertainment onboard Princess Cruises. She explains her role: "I am in charge of a team of 12: 10 dancers and two singers who entertain the passengers in the ship's 500 seat theatre. It's my job to maintain the choreography and deal with any illnesses and injuries in the troop. I also have to maintain our costumes and wigs – so my LIPA

background comes in useful. There can be rocky moments due to bad weather, sometimes we have to change the choreography as partner work involving lifts can be tricky in rough seas. Even so, we do have the odd fall – sometimes the sea can be quite calm and a sudden big wave can take a dancer by surprise. Or we can wake up in the morning to find that props have smashed during a stormy night."

Sarah sailed around New Zealand, Australia and the Pacific on her latest cruise and to Mexico and Alaska, which she describes as absolutely beautiful, on her first cruise for Princess. So the ups and downs of life at sea are a small price to pay and she can't wait to set sail again on the Dawn Princess in August.



Graduation 2009

At our graduation ceremony in July we are awarding companionships to seven people, who have shared their skills and expertise with us.

PIPPA AILION



Pippa has cast over 100 productions for the West End, UK national tours, nine events in overseas countries and capitals, as well as being the Resident Associate Director, casting three seasons of 15 European classics at The Old Vic for Jonathan Miller. Her West End castings include *Wicked*, *The Lion King* and *Into the Woods*. For three years, she was Head of Acting at the Central School of Speech and Drama.

NATRICIA BERNARD



It is unlikely that anyone has not seen Natricia's work spread, as it is, across television, fashion shows, commercials, sports and her own dancing; a sample of each: *Stars in their Eyes*, *La Senza*, BRITS Mastercard, Puma, Beyoncé and Bhangra Knights (just the Bs!). She has worked on musical promos for performers like The Scissor Sisters, Mika, Justin Timberlake and Oasis. She has performed with children, drag artists and puppeteers – to choose just a few.

JOHN FOX



In 1968, John co-founded and was the Artistic Director of Welfare State International – a pre-eminent organisation for celebratory theatre, site specific events, community art, installations, lantern parades and new ceremonies for rites of passage. In 1989 he was the Champion of *Lanternhouse* – the award winning £2.2m Lottery funded arts centre in Ulverston, Cumbria. Most recently, he has co-founded the *Dead Good Guides* with Sue Gill.

RICHARD HUDSON



Richard has designed sets for world-leading theatre and opera companies, including the National Theatre, Metropolitan Opera New York, La Scala Milan – to name a few. He is President of The Society of British Stage Designers and is a Royal Designer for Industry. In 1988, he won an Olivier Award for a season of plays at The Old Vic and his set designs for *The Lion King* have won many awards, including a Tony.

JOE MCGANN



Joe's career to date has included theatre, television, film and pop music. He has also performed with his brothers. Theatre includes *Guys and Dolls*, *Of Mice and Men*, *One Fine Day*, *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Wonderful Tennessee*. Television includes *Night and Day*, *Madam Bovary* and *Casualty*. He is also known as a television reporter on BBC's *South Today* programme. His films include *The Brylcreem Boys*, *Puckoon* and *Limescale*.

TONY PLATT



Tony learnt his craft at the Island Studios. His discography runs to four pages. His journey from assistant engineer to engineer included the likes of The Who, Led Zeppelin, Paul McCartney, Mott the Hoople and Bob Marley which led to a variety of reggae artists. There have also been quirky projects like an album of nothing but Tibetan Bells. Other bands/artists include AC/DC, Boomtown Rats and Foreigner. He is a director of The Music Producers Guild.

WILL YOUNG



After Will won *Pop Idol*, he became a household name. *Anything is Possible* became the fastest selling debut in UK chart history, *Leave Right Now* was nominated as a Best British single of the past 25 years at the 2005 BRIT Awards, while *Your Game* won Will's second BRIT Award. He has released four albums and had three sell out tours. He acted in *Mrs Henderson Presents* for the BBC, as well as Noel Coward's *The Vortex*. He has also appeared in a variety of charity performances and is an active philanthropist.



"And the winner of Best Newcomer is..." When Jaz Dhami heard his name called out to receive that award at the UK Asian Music Awards in March this year he was speechless.

"I am extremely honoured. To be in the industry for less than six months and receive the award is fantastic."

When Jaz completed his Diploma in Popular Music and Sound Technology at LIPA in 2003, he headed straight for Mumbai, to train with one of the best vocal coaches in India, Jayshree Shivram Ji. He adds: "I was also given the opportunity

to work with my uncle, who is a musical director, to widen my horizons and to get into the Bhangra or Bollywood industry."

The 24-year-old, who is from Birmingham, says winning the award for Best Newcomer has certainly boosted his profile, especially in the Bhangra industry.

Within the next five years, Jaz aims to become a successful Bollywood playback singer and he's confident of achieving that success.

"The industry is very competitive, but my moral is, believe in yourself and only then people will believe in you."

Contacting the Editor

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Thanks to all the graduates and staff who contributed to this edition, including Jan Buchanan, Mark Featherstone-Witty and Kate Williamson.

The opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of the Institute and we reserve the right to edit any material.

SENNHEISER

LIPA

BARCO

HIGH END SYSTEMS

LIPA