

Se-e Me Now

THE LIPA ALUMNI E-NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2007

Welcome to the Winter 2007 edition of your e-newsletter. You may be interested to know that we now have an official LIPA alumni facebook and myspace page to help you keep in touch. Don't forget our official web site at <http://www.lipa.ac.uk/alumni/> where you can network with other registered alumni, post messages on the bulletin board and search the skills database if you are looking for someone to help you with a project. The site makes it easier for us to check people who register, so it's the most secure way of networking. However you choose to stay in touch please make sure you keep us

informed of your current contact details in order to stay on our mailing list.

We have recently started an association for alumni based in the USA. If you are interested in joining the US association, or starting one in your own country, please let us know. We are planning a ten year reunion in the Spring for those of you who completed your course at LIPA in 1998 (or earlier). We will be sending out details soon, but in the meantime make sure that we have your contact details on file so that you don't miss this chance to eat, drink and reminisce.

Finally, if you have any ideas for services and benefits that you would like us to offer, please let us know.

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Three's Company

Three Norwegian musicians who came to LIPA as a trio and left as a trio are now touring with Joss Stone and making their mark on the pop charts, you guessed it, as a trio.

Oslo-based three piece Something Sally was formed in 2004 by then third years Thomas Kongshavn, Ane Kiran and Kristian Sveholm for their final projects.

Thomas says: "We arrived as friends and played together on different projects throughout our degree.

It was only towards the end that we formed Something Sally. I used it for songwriting, Kristian for production and Ane for her performance."

After graduating, the band were picked up by a record producer in Norway who helped them achieve a record deal, a hit 40 single and to put together an album - due out in February.

Through MySpace, they were also invited to support Joss Stone on tour. "Joss really liked us as a band," says Thomas. "After playing two shows with her in July, she invited us back for the rest of the European tour in October.

The album is a great mix of new stuff and some of the older stuff we put together at LIPA and is called *Familiar Strangers*."

Helping Guillemots Take Flight

Since graduating from the Management degree in 2001 and developing his company LTM, Ed Millett cites taking Guillemots from unknown artists to a band with a gold record and a Mercury nomination as a definite career highlight.

Ed also manages veteran rock legend Ray Davies, whose career with The Kinks and as a solo artist and songwriter spans several decades. Ed says that managing the two needs a different approach: "With a new band like Guillemots it is very much a parental role, guiding them through many of the processes and their first professional experiences. With an artist of Ray's experience it is often about breathing life, or adding a fresh perspective to his approach."

Busy times lie ahead for Ed. Guillemots have just finished the follow up to their debut album *Through The Windowpane* and Ray has just released his latest record in partnership with *The Sunday Times* and headlined the *BBC Electric Proms*.

Dying on Stage at Covent Garden

Dying on stage is not something most performers look forward to, but for contemporary dancer Ruth Varley it was all part of the challenge of dancing in *Iphigénie en Tauride* at the Royal Opera House throughout August and September. Ruth, who graduated with a Dance degree in 2003, was one of 10 dancers representing the main character of Iphigénie in the spectacular production at Covent Garden. Ruth described her role: "The actual work was very physical and there was an element of danger in that we used water bombs to create the effect of blood (brilliant fun!), ... on a steeply raked stage, with very dark lighting, performing extremely violent material (we literally had to kill each other over and over in a number of different ways in accordance with the story). It was a great adrenaline rush, and really fun to rehearse. The work was also (obviously being an Opera) heavily reliant on musical cues so it was crucial to be focused at all times and to keep an eye on the conductor, even when the action was slow paced. This was a good challenge for me."

Ruth enjoyed the production so much that she is now dancing in *Aida* with the English National Opera.

Musical Freedom for Annette

1998 Music graduate Annette von Goumoens has broken free from the musical taboos of her youth to piece together her latest production.

Singer Annette, from Switzerland, is currently starring in *Luderleider*, a musical theatre, cabaret-style piece that she has also written, produced and directed.

The story fits around a range of songs that Annette resolved to use after being prevented from performing them during her time as musical theatre student at the American Musical and Dramatic

Academy in New York.

“They were taboo,” she says. “The teachers thought they were too hard for us at that age. I didn’t agree so I saved them all up vowing to one day use them in a performance.

We have a small cast of just three people; there’s a singer, played by myself, an actress and a pianist.

We’ve been on tour in Switzerland since the autumn of 2006 and the show will continue playing onto tours in Germany and Austria – usually in small theatres to around 150 people.”



Georgia (Annette) sings the song “miss bird” in a scene from *Luderlieder*

Macbeth Brings out Ms Hyde’s Dark Side

Dancing in Verdi’s operatic version of *Macbeth* has been a gory experience for 2005 dance graduate Laura Hyde, but enormous fun. The production was performed at Glyndebourne from 19th May to 21st July this year and then at the Royal Albert Hall on 24th July as part of the BBC Proms, followed by a tour ending at the Sadler’s Wells on 8th December.

The production gives a modern twist to the *Macbeth* story and includes contemporary ballet, bringing out the elements of murder, magic and the supernatural in a different way from the traditional play. Laura explains: “My role is as the leader of the middle witches (the chorus are split into three, young, middle and old) and the production is set in a bleak Scotland a ‘generation ago’ ... My witch is based on Myra Hindley, so I wear a nasty grey jumper, slippers, and bright blue eye make up, complete with bleached blonde wig. I am also one of Macbeth’s three apparitions. My interval breaks are spent in make-up having a huge caesarean scar stuck on my stomach that I have to reveal to Macbeth and the audience as the apparition warns that ‘no man of natural birth can harm you’. This is very gory but one of my favourite moments of the opera!”

Leaving aside the macabre elements of the role Laura says that being a part of Glyndebourne was amazing, “It’s such a beautiful setting to rehearse. The grounds and gardens are stunning and the theatre is spectacular. I want to audition to be part of the festival next year and I am really hoping to be invited back.”

Godspell Choice Sounds Good to Colyn

As Sound Number 1 for the UK tour of *Godspell* Colyn Lewin was responsible for everything sound related – from sorting out the microphones for the cast and mixing the show, to managing the crew packing up and taking the equipment on to the next venue. The production started at the beginning of September in Peterborough and took in eight venues before the final show at the end of November. 2005 Theatre and Performance

Technology graduate Colyn says:

“With a cast of 11 plus a five piece band at 2000 to 3000 seat venues this was the biggest show I have ever been in charge of.”

Colyn is taking a well-earned break over Christmas, and is in the enviable position of being able to choose whether to rejoin the show for a longer tour in January or work on one of several other tours he has been offered.

Working with the Talent Poole

Sound Technology graduate Tom Poole-Kerr has been keeping a close monitor on some of the biggest bands coming through Liverpool at the Carling Academy.

Bath-native Tom, 23, has been working as a monitor engineer at the venue for the last 12 months:

“It’s been fantastic for me to work with some of the big names that have appeared lately. Bands like Skid Row, Black Rebel Motorcycle Club and Avenged Sevenfold,” says Tom, who also works as sound engineer at the Cavern club.

“The Carling really take you under their wing as a company and teaches you the way they do things. It’s kind of been like an extension of LIPA except I get paid for it.

I’m really happy there, and I think I’ll be staying in live sound for now. I’m intrigued by post production and studio engineering, but I feel there’s a more stable future in live sound.”

Heller's Busy Time for Moviemaker Mark.

2001 graduate Mark Heller has made *The Passage* from the Acting degree to become a screenwriting and directing sensation in Los Angeles.

29-year-old Mark, from Oxton, Wirral, recently returned from the Toronto Film Festival where his directorial debut screened, prior to a forthcoming international release.

The Passage, starring Stephen Dorff (*Blade*), is a dark Hitchcockian thriller shot on location in Morocco.

Mark explains the premise: "Stephen's character falls for a beautiful Moroccan woman. He ends up accompanying her

back to her home town in the mountains when she suddenly disappears..."

Mark's close friend, 1998 Management graduate Lynette Howell, produced the film.

He is now back in London for the first time in four years working on the post-production of his second feature.

"It's called *Star Crossed*", he says. "It's a modernisation of Romeo and Juliet – half in Portuguese and half in English. My editor is finding just how

much of a perfectionist I am, but for me this is where we put the jigsaw together. I have all the pieces and now it's time to make the movie I have in my head."

Next up for Mark is a return to the States to begin production on *Normal Life*, a project that he and Lynette have been working on for many years.

He concludes: "Lynette and I have been best friends forever, but I think LIPA graduates continue to employ each other because you know it's someone you can trust to get the job done."

Miriam Focuses on Success

Soon after starting work as Design Assistant with Adam Bassett and acclaimed lighting designer Patrick Woodroffe, 2006 Theatre and Performance Technology graduate Miriam Evans realised just how good life was. Miriam reflects: "I was sat with Phil Collins and the rest of Genesis to my right, watching in awe as the most stunning of cues were shown to them for their feedback." The second occasion when Miriam needed to do a reality check was working on Live Earth, she describes the moment "Standing on the pitch in the early hours, calling the focus, it suddenly occurred to me, I was on the pitch at Wembley getting ready for a concert including some of the biggest names in music!"

Miriam will be spending some time in Macau in December to make alterations to the lighting on a show, other projects she is working on range from a production of *Peter Pan* to a lighting concept proposal for the Reno Baseball Field in Nevada. Miriam is thrilled with the opportunities that have come her way: "I am absolutely loving working with Patrick and Adam and they are providing me with experiences and opportunities that I never expected to be achieving, let alone a year after leaving LIPA!"

On the Whiteside of the Curtain

Kerry Whiteside has escaped her marriage to Harry Houdini only to find herself in the mystical land of Narnia, in an eventful first full year away from LIPA.

The 2006 Acting graduate, 22, spent her summer appearing in the touring *Houdini - The Musical* as the great magician's wife Bess which included performing magic tricks on stage.

Now, Kerry is part of the ensemble and understudying the parts of Lucy and Susan in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* at the West Yorkshire Playhouse and we spoke to her immediately after opening night.

"It was brilliant," she enthused. "We got a great reception from the audience, and there's something for any age group. Now we've got 84 performances to go between now and 2nd February.

It's a great show but very tiring, particularly in the second half where there are lots of quick changes, one minute you're a Narnian the next a Horror, but it's really exciting and I know I am going to enjoy every minute."

Also featuring in the show is 2007 Acting graduate Ben Sewell, who plays Grumpskin.

Taking Creativity to the Max

When asked to stage a play starring Thandie Newton and Kevin Spacey, Maximilian Souchay gave free rein to his imagination in creating a Medici style palazzo in a fairground setting to house the performance.

Maximilian is Head of Creation at Zurich based international company Rufener events. He is responsible for the conceptual work behind the events, many of which include putting on customised shows with music and dancers, such as the play commissioned by IWC Watches as part of a new product launch.

Maximilian explains the process behind the ideas: "The first step is to develop a thorough understanding of the brand we are working for, and its clients and then of the target customer. This involves a number of talks with the client. We will then hold creativity sessions and sometimes bring in specialists to come up with ideas which are feasible. It's about creating the right ideas for the right customers."

Maximilian, who comes from Germany, graduated from the Enterprise Management programme in 1999. He has spent five years with Rufener, starting off doing freelance conceptual work and working his way up to a seat on the management board and heading a team of six people.

Imagine All the Children

The Liverpool Children's Festival is an annual event – but something special is planned for 2008. The Event Manager for the Festival is 2004 Community Arts graduate Dee Whittle. Dee explains: "This year the theme for the Festival is 'Year of Imagine' and we have come up with the concept of an imaginary twin city which will be landing in Liverpool's cultural quarter. We are currently raising funding for the programme, which includes experimental theatre on the streets around the museums and galleries. Up to 1000 children of all ages will be involved in the Festival." Dee works closely with a steering committee of 14 young people with an age range of 7 to 17 years, together they make the decisions and market the Festival; they have recently created a film and a web site (<http://www.liverpoolchildrensfestival.org.uk/>).

Dee also works as a freelance community arts practitioner in Shropshire, with primary schools and councils in the region. She recently ran an inter-generational project with young people teaching the elderly how to use



myspace and created a sensory garden for a primary school in collaboration with a landscape gardener.

Laura Takes the Next Step

The production of *The 39 Steps* at the Criterion Theatre in the West End has a cast of four playing 139 roles, so demands on the wardrobe department are enormous with lightning quick costume changes required throughout the fast-paced thriller. Laura Broughton, who graduated in Theatre and Performance Design in 2005, is Wardrobe Mistress. Laura tells us about the production: "As you can imagine there are many, many costumes and changes! We are very hectic throughout the show and when we started I remember thinking 'I'll never get this' but now when new cast come in they are so grateful the crew know exactly what to do, as there is so much for them to remember. The costumes are bought or made, usually by the supervisor who will come in for cast changes. I am responsible for maintaining these and making or buying small items of costume that may need replacing during the run." Laura joined the show after completing postgraduate studies in wardrobe at RADA. She has been working on the production for over a year and the run continues until June 2008. The show will also be touring from January and Laura hopes to assist with the costume supervision on the tour to gain more experience and take a further step on the road to achieving her ambition of becoming a freelance Costume Supervisor.

Helping Madonna Sound Jungk

If you're wondering why Madonna and the Foo Fighters sounded so great on their last tours, Kevin Jungk will have the answer.

The 2004 Sound Technology graduate is racking-up an impressive resume of working with top stars and on big events as a Field Engineer for Sennheiser USA.

Kevin, who was the Sennheiser Scholar during his time at LIPA, has also designed the sound for The Superbowl and The Grammy Awards, while working on location.

Kevin, from Frankfurt, says: "I'll go along to meet with the acts for about a week and design, troubleshoot and fine tune their sound set up for the tour.

When I'm not on location I'll be at the shop in Connecticut repairing the professional equipment. I've managed to carve out a niche for myself in the company.

There is a lot of travelling involved and this is really what I want to do with my life."

Kevin is also one of the LIPA Alumni Representatives in the USA

Work Keeps Coming for Carys

When we spoke to Carys Reynolds, there were roars of 'He's behind you' and gales of children's laughter in the background. Carys is working on the wardrobe for *Peter Pan* at the Millfield Theatre, North London, dressing everyone from pirates to crocodiles.

Carys has lost count of the performances she has worked on as a freelance theatre and design technician since she graduated from the Theatre and Performance Design programme in July 2006.

She told us: "I've been lucky enough to work more or less non-stop in the theatre since leaving LIPA. I was recently Stage Manager on *Menopause - the Musical*, at the Shaw Theatre, managing the props and scene changes. I worked alongside Su Pollard who was wonderful, and if anything, even madder than she appears on screen. I've also worked as a technician and produced sets for an amateur production of *Little Shop of Horrors*. There have been lots of different challenges and a very steep learning curve, but my training at LIPA really helped".

The panto run ends on 6th January and Carys already has her next project lined up. She will be working on costumes for *Just So* a musical based on the Rudyard Kipling stories, which will be showing at the Intimate Theatre, North London in May.

Going Dutch

Emma Winterbourne has already topped the singles charts in Holland and has not even graduated.

Emma took time out from her studies at LIPA to join the group XYP. Mentored by Gary Barlow, the band reached No 1 in Holland with their single *Body to Body* and also the No 2 slot with *Confessions*, penned by the Take That star.

Emma tried out at open auditions in Liverpool and was invited to a final audition in London, when she was offered a place in the band. She spent two great years with the group, however they split up late this year. She is now back at LIPA completing the final stages of her studies on the BA (Hons) Music degree.

She says: "I'm very proud of the band's achievements. It was amazing to perform songs written by Gary Barlow and Karen Poole, who has written material for Kylie Minogue. Being with XYP can only help my future career aspirations.

I feel I have come on tremendously as a songwriter after the camp we took part in as a band. It's great bringing that experience back with me to complete my studies at LIPA and I'm looking forward to getting back into auditioning."



Creativity + Employment Conference

This major conference, a knowledge transfer and research initiative, will take place at LIPA Wednesday 26 March – Saturday 29 March 2008. The conference will explore the future trends,

issues and practices in vocational performing arts education and training.

The full conference programme and booking arrangements will be available on the conference website <http://www.lipaconference.org/> by the end of January. Confirmed key-speakers include Terry Hands (Clwyd Theatre Cymru), Wayne Eagling (English National Ballet) and John Smith (Musicians Union) with performances from Chickenshed and English National Ballet. We are awaiting confirmation from key policy makers and other practitioners.

Feels Like Teen Spirit

Acting like a teenager is all in a day's work for Margaret Carlin who graduated from the Community Arts programme in 2003. As a Project Manager with Cragrats Ltd she tours schools around the UK and Ireland delivering workshops.

Margaret is currently working with the Careers Service to show pupils what their different career and learning options are. Margaret explains: "We will have a script but we adapt it, adding different scenes relating to popular culture, such as *Big Brother*, and put on a 30 minute show in which we act the roles of teenagers exploring different learning options such as apprenticeships and academic courses. We include song and dance to bring alive the message that you can learn in a way that suits you." The show is followed by a workshop, led by Margaret, for up to 300 pupils.

Margaret goes on to explain why she loves her job so much: "We ask the audience to fill in feedback forms and the response to our shows is fantastic. We have had pupils tell us that we have changed their lives by opening their eyes to what they want to do with their futures."

Other projects she has run include working alongside Leicestershire Police to put on a show called 'Trick or Treat' to raise awareness of safety at Halloween, which resulted in a drop of 50 percent in anti-social behaviour.

Stories by Jan Buchanan and Chris Smith. Thanks to those graduates and staff who contributed to this publication. Please send any comments to alumni@lipa.ac.uk or to: Jan Buchanan, The Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts, Mount Street, Liverpool, L1 9HF

*Wishing you a happy and successful 2008 from all
at LIPA*