

# See me now

## THE LIVERPOOL INSTITUTE FOR PERFORMING ARTS

Photograph by Solveig Self



### Solo 'GRAMMY' win

What started as a journey of self-discovery for Malin Pettersen, ended with her winning the Norwegian equivalent of a GRAMMY.

*References Pt. 1* was named Best Country Album at the Spellemannprisen in March. Malin, who completed the Foundation Certificate in Popular Music and Sound Technology (2008), says the win was a huge surprise. "I remember walking down the stairs from the stage to the press room, with the award in my hand, wondering if it was all real. It was crazy."

A member of the band Lucky Lips for 12 years, *References Pt. 1* was Malin's first solo album. She says she needed to do it to develop. "I wanted to figure out, who I was musically without them."

"I love them to pieces, so it was not to distance myself from them. I wanted to become more evolved as a musician, songwriter and producer, so I could then bring those skills to the band's music too."

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## Bryan's perfect Storm(zy)

"When Fraser T calls, you know you will be working on some top level material so I had to say yes to this." Bryan Wilson (Sound Technology, 2008) had decided to stop working as an engineer, when he was approached about one last project by songwriter-producer Fraser T Smith, who's worked with the likes of Adele,

Gorillaz and Drake.

It turned out to be work on Stormzy's award-winning album *Gang Signs & Prayer*. Bryan, who is 33, worked on six tracks, including *Blinded by Your Grace, Pt. 2* featuring MNEK. "Being involved from the inception of the project was really something special to witness. Quite a few of

the songs came from just having musicians in the studio to jam. Then, when I came back on the project six months later, I saw how they developed from a jam into a full-blown song. The passion, care and love Stormzy puts into the work was top notch."

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## Welcome to the house of fun

"There are no words to explain how overjoyed I was." Acting graduate Evie Pickerill (2014) is describing how it felt to land her dream job as a children's presenter for the BBC. "It's been an ambition of mine since I was 16, so to achieve it was something really special."

Evie, who is from the West Midlands, is one of a team of presenters on *CBeebies House* on the BBC children's channel CBeebies. She started the job in

June last year and couldn't be happier. "I love children and I love exploring the world of imagination. CBeebies is a great way for children to learn and have fun, I feel so lucky to be on the channel."

CBeebies is aimed primarily at pre-school children, broadcasting programmes throughout the day and early evening. *CBeebies House* is the channel's on-air home, with presenters providing continuity and content between the programmes.

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## Stevie shines on Take That tour

Riding pillion on the back of Gary Barlow's motorbike would be a fantasy moment for many people. For Stevie Mahoney, as a dancer performing with Take That on their spectacular Odyssey tour, it was a nightly occurrence.

Our 2013 Dance graduate was one of 14 female dancers on the tour, which started in February and ended with a final performance at Cardiff Stadium in June.

"It was their greatest hits tour, so every number was a different style, from showgirl and commercial, via Fosse, to 90s grooves. For *Pray* we used sign language. The costumes were fabulous - who doesn't love a catsuit? My favourite number was *Sure*, as it used Kim Gavin's original choreography from the band's MTV performance in 1993."

Stevie, originally from Liverpool but now based in London, got offered a place on the tour after being invited to a private audition via her agents Dancers Inc.

She is used to performing before huge

audiences, having previously danced at the BRIT Awards with Little Mix and Dua Lipa. The arena tour, though, was on another level. "The crowds were unbelievable, so loud and crazy. Many have been loyal superfans for 30 years."

The fans weren't the only ones making a noise. Stevie explains: "The picture was taken on opening night. I screamed so loud my voice went down the mic, which made Gary laugh."

The 28-year-old describes the band as kind, humble and appreciative of the talents and energy of the dancers and crew. It's the kind of professionalism that Stevie absorbed from her training here: "It's important to have discipline and respect; to know how to conduct yourself professionally on and off the stage. You are a product and you need to showcase the best version of you. That's the key to having a long and successful career in this industry."



Stevie, front, riding pillion behind Gary Barlow

## Don't stop me now

"We all knew that we were working on something that could potentially be huge and that was quite exciting in itself." Less than two years after leaving LIPA, Sound Technology graduate Tom Melling is reflecting on being part of the Oscar- and BAFTA-winning sound team that worked on *Bohemian Rhapsody*.

"The set pieces throughout the movie are so exciting, that it's hard for people not to enjoy them. I think, right from the start of the mix, it was clear that the movie was going to be pretty special - especially from a sound point of view."

Tom works at Twickenham Studios and was sound mix technician on the film. The movie won Best Sound at the BAFTAs and Best Sound Mixing and Best Sound Editing at the Oscars. Fellow Sound Technology graduates Will Miller (2014), Twickenham Studios, and Rory de Carteret (2012), at Boom Post, also worked on the film.

For Tom - who is from Cheshire but now based in London - it was a great opportunity to work with experienced, established professionals. "The sound team on this film were not only a group of insanely talented individuals, but also some of the nicest people I have ever met."

"You can learn so much by just observing people and I picked up so many different things from every single person that was in that room."

There are now four Sound Technology graduates at Twickenham Studios. Tom says having those connections really helped. "I had to move my entire life down to London. That's quite a hard thing to do, but having the guys at Twickenham, who had been in the exact same situation, made that so much easier."

"There is also a rough judgement from Twickenham on what you already know, so everyone knows what needs to be built on, instead of having to build knowledge from the ground up."



## Caring for the carers

Having caring responsibilities for a loved one at home can be hard. It's especially so for a young person. As activities coordinator at Cheshire Young Carers (CYC), Kacey Baker is part of a team offering support and respite for 6- to 18-year-olds caring for a parent or sibling.

Kacey, 26, explains some of the problems facing those she works with: "They often fall behind peers in education, become increasingly isolated or miss out on experiences that typical children have. The work I do at CYC ensures that the young carers we support, have the chance for these childhood experiences and the opportunity to build lasting friendships."

The school summer holidays will be a busy time for our 2014 Community Drama graduate, as she co-ordinates a continuous six-week programme of activities ranging from theatre trips to canal boat experiences and muddy trails at Manley Mere.

There were no holiday activities before Kacey joined the organisation and it's something she has worked hard to develop alongside her colleagues. Last year, she ran over 70 events.



Kacey on a CYC visit to Knowsley Safari Park

Her work is more than a job to Kacey: "Brendon Burns [our Head of Applied Theatre & Community Drama] once said that what we do as facilitators and artists is a 'vocation not a career'. This rings true for me with the work I am doing in the third sector. My facilitation skills allow me to engage large groups of children on trips and in evening sessions. This engagement ensures they have fun and are always safe."

"It's extremely rewarding, especially when it is bettering the lives of the next generation."

# From Weller to Winterfell

It's been a landmark year for Hannah Peel (Music, 2004): a new album, high-profile collaborations and scoring a feature-length *Game of Thrones* documentary. "Twelve months of total joy," says Hannah. "It feels like years of trying ideas out and experimenting have grown into one fruitful tree."

As well as the *Game of Thrones* documentary *The Last Watch*, which marked the end of the final series, Hannah also wrote many of the string arrangements for Paul



Paul Weller and Hannah at the soundcheck for BBC Radio Two In Concert. Photograph by Andy Croft

Weller's album *True Meanings*. This led to her scoring his orchestral shows at the Royal Festival Hall in October, with Hannah directing the orchestra. "I only conducted, because he encouraged me to do it over and over again. I was very happy to let someone much more experienced do it, but you know I'm so glad it happened."

"I learnt a lot about myself. I'd do it all again in a heartbeat."

Earlier in the year, she released *Particles in Space*, a re-imagining of her acclaimed album *Mary Casio: Journey To Cassiopeia*, collaborating with a series of artists, producers and engineers to re-work each track.

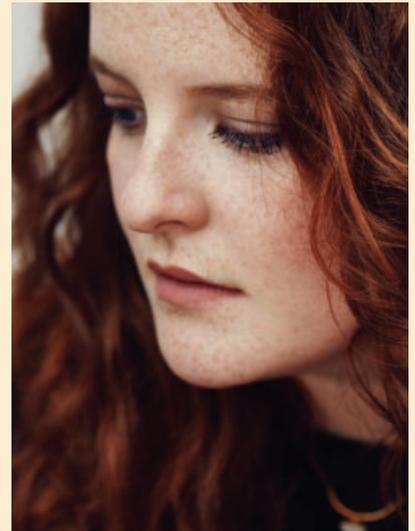
While in March 2019, her work with new Faber poet Will Burns *Chalk Hill Blue*, a combination of spoken word and electronic music, was released.

Hannah says respect and keeping an open mind are key to working with other artists. "Music to me is always collaborative. It's like an energy, a subconscious communication of sorts that doesn't even need to be verbal."

"If you work with other people you get an entirely new viewpoint on your own music too. You see everything with perspective. It's immensely valuable to developing but it's not always easy to do, as we all have egos at times to satisfy."

Hannah's currently writing a new piece of music for Bristol-based Paraorchestra and preparing for more live performances with Will Burns. "We will be playing a special version of the record at The Barbican in London. It's a dream come true to play there. I can't wait."

## One step back, two steps forward



Taking a break from performing has certainly worked for Sophie Cooke. Last year, she co-wrote her first top ten single. "It was amazing. I really needed that to verify that I'd made the right decision in stepping back from being an artist."

Sophie (Music, 2015) co-wrote *All I Am* for Jess Glynne, which reached number seven in the UK singles chart and was on the number one album *Always In Between*. Up until 2018 Sophie, who is from Newbury, but now based in London, had been writing, recording and performing as Frances. "I loved making the music, but the love stopped there. Touring and international promotion are exhausting, overwhelming and you can feel like a rag doll being pulled between different marketing territories."

"I'd always wanted to write for/with other artists and produce. I thought it was the perfect opportunity to give myself a break and give it a real go. As expected, I absolutely love it."

In January, the 25-year-old started writing a blog *The Big A: Tales of an Anxious Millennial*. "I first experienced anxiety during my time at LIPA. It was really tough for me. Luckily LIPA were supportive."

"I think us artistic folk are a little more prone to mental health problems. It comes with the territory. It doesn't help that most of us are competent performers too, so we're able to cover it up. Talking is so, so important."

Sophie continues to write with other artists and has begun working as a producer. She also has new material to release under her own name. "I'm just figuring out how I want to release it and how I want to go about it. There'll be no big international tours this time, so a major label isn't an option."

"Retaining the ownership of my masters is what is important to me, so that's what my manager and I are working on right now."

## Telling *The Winter's Tale* to kids

Billed as 'the perfect introduction to Shakespeare' for young audiences, the National Theatre's production of *The Winter's Tale* saw the Bard's classic story of jealousy adapted for children.

Ebony Feare (Acting, 2003) played Camilla (Camillo in the original version) in the production. "We added dance, songs and a live band including myself playing the cajón. We also had Gina the sheep, an amazing puppet, who would get involved with the audience, which the kids loved."

Ebony, originally from Leicester and now living in Manchester, explains: "The play deals with jealousy, adults making wrong decisions and love. I guess this is what some of our young audiences may see at home, so it's very relatable."

"The language used is beautiful, so for children to be introduced to Shakespeare's writing through children's theatre is fantastic. It's simplified and adapted in a way that children will enjoy even more."

Among Ebony's other recent credits are *Babe the Sheep Pig* and the UK tour of *Hare and Tortoise*. "It wasn't a choice to do more family shows, but I enjoy it more. Maybe it's because I'm an actor-musician and most children's theatres like to use

actors to play live music within their shows, which I think is great."

Ebony is a member of award-winning gospel choir Manchester Inspirational Voices. Earlier this year, the choir performed with Take That at their Manchester concerts. "It was a 'wow' experience. It was so surreal being on stage with Take That and Lulu performing in front of 21,000 people each night for five nights."



Photograph by Ori Jones

## Making mega hits

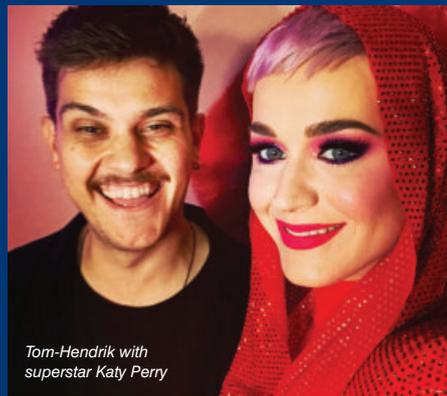
As a product manager for Universal Music in Germany, Tom-Hendrik Uebelgünn (Management, 2017) gets to work with some of the biggest artists in the world to promote their new releases.

"I look after a roster of international artists within the dance and electronic repertoire, but the term electronic is so broad and has influences on so many other genres. So, I have the pleasure to not only work with core electronic DJ/producers like DJ Snake, Marshmello and The Chemical Brothers, but also with artists like Years & Years, Katy Perry, Maggie Rogers and The Weeknd."

Based in his hometown of Berlin, 26-year-old Tom-Hendrik explains: "It entails a lot of marketing and project management, but also a lot of team management and coordination, as I work with an in-house team of TV, press and radio promoters, digital sales specialists, content creation managers and many more."

"I work across 15+ artists and campaigns at once. My day-to-day schedule can really vary from putting together promo schedules, when the artist is on tour, to creating a unique content plan building up to a release."

Although Tom-Hendrik says all his artists are equally exciting, one stood out, in particular, for him last year. "The Years & Years record release show we did in Berlin was an absolute highlight. We transformed the whole venue into a Years & Years world."



Tom-Hendrik with superstar Katy Perry

## Bryan's perfect Storm(zy)

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Bryan, who hails from Toronto in Canada and now lives in London, tells us he was overwhelmed by the reaction to the album: "It's pretty incredible. That album represented the end of the engineering portion of my career and became the first UK album I had worked on that went on to number one and got Platinum certification. It was also BRIT and Ivor Novello Award-winning and Mercury Prize-nominated: what a great way to finish."

Since then, Bryan has worked with American duo Sofi Tukker, attracting more awards attention with two GRAMMY nominations. "I would definitely say I'm proud (and surprised) to be able to say I'm a multi-GRAMMY-nominated producer/songwriter/mixer so soon."

"But it isn't so much the awards themselves for specific projects that make me happy. For me, the culmination of awards and titles represent all the hard work and tedious moments and whatever else you had to go through to get to where you are now."

## Technical theatre in Tromsø

Johanna Coraline Jensen (TPT, 2015) describes Hålogaland Teater as a theatre which "does everything". She tells us: "I can go from doing an immersive toddler show in a tent for ten babies, to a large-scale musical to a multi-venue show, where the audience is split into three groups and ends up on a floating stage on the sea."

Since 2016, she has been a stage manager at the theatre in her hometown of Tromsø, where she regularly works with fellow LIPA graduates. Jørn Fuller-Gee (Acting, 2004) is a permanent actor there and Mari Lotherington (TPD, 2013) and Gjermund Andresen (TPD, 2004) have designed some of her shows.

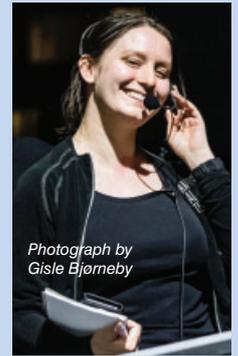
Last year, the theatre staged *Le Père* by Florian Zeller, which is about a character with Alzheimer's and how he sees the world. During the play, the set shifted to reflect his condition, with 14 carefully choreographed scene changes. "To make the furniture and props disappear seamlessly, the technicians had to wear night vision goggles and move quietly in the dark, while also guiding actors to their next spot. While rehearsing the show I had an infrared camera and monitor, so I was

able to see what was actually going on."

Johanna, who is 26, played another important role on *Le Père*. Having spent time growing up in Belfort in France, she translated the French play into Norwegian, which she will do on another production later this year.

Another recent rewarding show for Johanna was *Tobias og dagen det smalt*. The play addressed gender nonconformity for younger audiences and won a Hedda Award, Norway's biggest theatre accolade, for Best Children's Play.

Next up, is Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*, which opens in September. "The set involves foam machines and a giant sandbox. The role of younger and older Peer is being played by two women. It will be really interesting to see their take on it."



Photograph by Gisle Ejerneby

## A royal appointment

Over the last two years, Tom Munno (Sound Technology, 2017) has worked on a whole series of high-profile live TV events, but there's one that stands out: the wedding of Prince Harry to Megan Markle in May 2018.

"The royal wedding was a personal highlight. It involved climbing up various towers around Windsor Castle to rig microphones along the route of the couple's procession."

"It was nice to know that I played a very small part in a historic event - albeit a bit scary to think that the microphones that I rigged were live to 1.9 billion people."

Tom, who is from Bedford but now based in Reading, works as a sound engineer for NEP UK: a company that supplies equipment and crew for TV outside broadcasts. As well as the royal wedding, his credits include *Michael McIntyre's Big Show*, ESPN's Wimbledon coverage and the Korean tennis open.

The job involves a lot of travel, which Tom loves, and working in some highly pressurised situations. "I learnt quite early on that communication is key if something goes wrong. I will aim to clearly communicate what's happening over radio before I do anything else."

"I've also learnt to relax. For example, walking to a problem instead of running. It means when I arrive, I'm in a better frame of mind and have had more time to think about a solution."

A career in broadcasting has long been an ambition of Tom's and was confirmed



Tom in front of Windsor Castle

by working on live broadcasts throughout his time here. Tom confirms the technical skills weren't all he learnt. "LIPA was very good at ensuring that there were enough group-based tasks to allow us to develop our team working skills. This is vital in something like broadcast, which is such a collaborative effort."

## Solo 'GRAMMY' win

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Malin, who is from Oslo, found working solo had its pros and cons. "It was much easier to put processes in motion and set a timeline that fitted me, but, when tough decisions came along, I didn't really have anyone to ask about them."

For her next project, 31-year-old Malin took another step into the unknown, recording a collection of songs that feature just her vocal and guitar. "After the full band production of *References Pt. 1*, I wanted to get back to the core of the song."

Whether working with a band or on her own, Malin's time here will continue to be an influence. "I feel empowered because of



Photograph by Solveig Seij

knowledge I gained at LIPA. If I'm talking to sound techs, I know that I have some actual understanding of what we're talking about."

"It helps me define what I need, which is a huge advantage."

## Buyer Jess plays a blinder

On an early morning film shoot, Jessica Imrie may be the first person on set. She may also be carrying a large arrangement of flowers, so all that can be seen of her is a pair of legs. As assistant/petty cash buyer for TV shows such as *McMafia* and films such as biopic *Tolkien* it's her responsibility to make sure that the standby art team have everything they need, before the cameras roll.

Jess (Theatre & Performance Design, 2015) explains: "I work to a budget and have a float to purchase action props, consumables and hero props that the on-set team and actors need for certain shots. Usually I work to a list provided by the set decorator or the buyer, fulfilling the list creatively and within the constraints of the period that the drama or film is set in. In theatre terms, it would be the equivalent to an assistant stage manager or stage manager with a bit of assistant designer thrown into the mix."



Jess on the set of *Peaky Blinders* with a Drexel – those cut throat razors don't blunt themselves

The 26-year-old got her first break soon after graduating when she joined the crew of series three of *Peaky Blinders*, which was then filming in Liverpool. She spent three years in the city, but is now based back in her native London.

Since then she has worked in the art department on shows including the fourth series of *Peaky Blinders* and series three of *Victoria* and films including *The Secret Garden*, to be released next year.

Jess recently had her first opportunity to work abroad, filming a gritty drama about the Iraq war for Channel 4 in Morocco.

On recent projects including the film *Ghost Stories*, starring Martin Freeman and an Andrew Davies adaptation of Jane Austen's *Sanditon*, which will air this autumn on ITV, she has taken a step up to work as production buyer.

Jess loves her job but warns those aspiring to work in the industry to be prepared for long hours and to keep the secrets of filming to themselves: "I am banned from watching with my friends now – I give everything away."

## Music and laughter

Music and humour may not always go hand in hand, but for composer, producer and musical director Lars Devik they have proved to be a winning combination.

Lars has worked extensively with musical comedy duo, Ylvis. He composed and produced the tracks for *Stories from Norway*, which won the Gullruten (Norwegian Emmy) Award for Best Comedy in 2018. The show also picked up the gong for Best Comedy Format at the 2019 International Format Awards in Cannes in April. He also wrote and produced Ylvis' YouTube hits such as *Stonehenge*, *Jan Egeland*, *The Cabin* and *Massachusetts*.

Brothers Vegard and Bård Ylvisåker, who make up Ylvis, and Lars have a shared history as well as a shared taste in comedy: "Vegard, Bård and I grew up together. I guess that makes our collaboration and way of writing quite unique, since we know each other so well. Words and music go hand in hand, but usually we make rough music sketches first and then they put down the lyrics afterwards. Sometimes we work individually on music parts and then put ideas together. Christian Løchstør is also heavily involved, mainly on the lyric part.

"Obviously, we share the same sense of humour. I guess we grew up together musically too, as we shared the same nerdy

interest and passion for music and have the same music references. We co-write the songs. Usually, I do the arrangements and the production. However, Ylvis are very much part of that process too as executive producers."

That spirit of collaboration is something that the 40-year-old recalls from his days here. "I learnt a lot from working with such a wide range of talent from all over the world. I was totally open-minded – which LIPA encourages its students to be. I treasure those three years of my life greatly. So many good memories, both musically and socially."

Lars (Music, 2003) also enjoys getting out of the studio. He was musical director for Ylvis' *Expensive Jacket Tour*, which played venues including Oslo Spektrum, The Globe in Stockholm and the Pohoda Festival in Slovakia.

Recently, Lars again helped to turn music into comedy gold as musical supervisor on *The Book of Mormon* at Det Norske Teatret: "The music is so cleverly written and arranged, yet the creators make fun of the musical genre at the same time. We all had a blast working on this material, the ensemble, the band and me." The show went on to be the longest running musical in Norway.

Left to right: Vegard Ylvisåker, Lars Devik, Bård Ylvisåker. Photograph by Pål Schaathun



## Beth rocks out in Birmingham

For rock fan Beth Hogan (Management, 2010), championing her home county's musical heritage, is a dream job. Originally from Wolverhampton and now based in Birmingham, she is project coordinator for Home of Metal.

"Just like we associate Liverpool with The Beatles, Birmingham is the birthplace of Black Sabbath and heavy metal. Our job, through exhibitions and events, is to join the dots between the music, social histories of the fans and visual arts to produce a new perspective on celebrating heavy metal."



This year, Home of Metal is hosting a major exhibition at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery alongside a season of events to celebrate 50 years of Black Sabbath. The exhibition features rare fan memorabilia and recreated scenes from the band's history. "Getting everything over has been incredibly hard work for the team, with the million rolls of red tape you have to cut through to import things such as Ozzy Osbourne's boots."

Bookings have come from all over the world from Sweden to South Africa, Japan to Lebanon. "Seeing the community come together speaks volumes to the world's love for the genre. The fans live and breathe it. We have amazing volunteers and I hear the term 'I found my tribe' from them a lot. I think that resonates with a lot of fans."

The 30-year-old describes her degree here "as a secret weapon in the industry". She explains: "I had access to hands on, real world industry experience and I wasn't waiting for my first job to apply my new skills. I also have to shout out to the Music Law classes, from contracts to PRS to funding applications, the education I received has been completely invaluable."

Beth completed her final year placement with Heavy Metal Records and first worked for Home of Metal in 2011. "If I could go back and tell 16-year-old Beth this is my job, she wouldn't believe it! There have been so many 'fan girl' moments along the way."

## Mercury rising

"I'm a working-class lad from Leeds, from a single parent family. I didn't go to Cambridge or Oxford and I've no theatrical ancestry. To get to where I am now, I had to start at the bottom, learning my craft on the London and Edinburgh fringes." So says Ryan McBryde\*, the newly appointed creative director of Mercury Theatre in Colchester. The journey has taken him via the West End and the world of German theatre, with several award milestones along the way.

Ryan (Acting, 1999) explains how he came to direct in Germany: "I started out working at the English Theatre of Frankfurt, directing English language productions. My work got spotted by a producer in Stuttgart, who invited me to direct plays like *The Crucible*, *1984* and *Faust* in German. It was genuinely daunting at first, but the German actors spoke fantastic English, so we never had problems understanding one another. I work with a bilingual text, which I action within an inch of its life. Once I'd learnt what the action verbs were in German, I was good to go."

Language proved to be no barrier. *1984* was nominated for the prestigious Deutscher Theaterpreis Der Faust and *Faust* won the Stuttgart Audience Award. Ryan ranks both among his favourite pieces of work. Another of his recent favourites was *Pieces of String* at Mercury Theatre, which was nominated for the



2018 UK Theatre Award for Best Musical Production and won Best New Musical at The Stage Debut Awards.

The 41-year-old's many other credits include resident director on *Billy Elliot* and *Bat Boy* in the West End and working for the RSC on the development of *Matilda the Musical*.

Directing was always Ryan's passion. When he was studying here, he and four other graduates established theatre company Rogue State. They went on to create a name for themselves in fringe theatre, with Ryan directing five of their productions. As an actor, it was the rehearsal process and creating a performance that he enjoyed most. He is delighted therefore to be back at Mercury Theatre in his new role, responsible for the artistic vision and creative direction there.

\*Ryan Stephenson at LIPA

## Roberta distresses Macbeth

When Roberta McKeown (TPD, 2012) joined the National Theatre's tour of *Macbeth* as a wardrobe deputy, it was a total departure from her previous jobs. "*Macbeth* was my fourth tour and it was completely different. I've been working on musicals for the past few years, lots of singing, dancing and bright lights. The show was so dark and serious, but that was not true for the cast and crew."

Roberta explains how the post-apocalyptic setting impacted the costumes: "Everything in the world is barely surviving except for plastic. The costumes were modern day and military-orientated. Varying types of khakis and camos were used and pieces of plastic were sewn in to give the feel that the garments had been mended in that universe."

"There's so much blood used during the show, it was essential that items of clothing were thoroughly cleaned, then had to be heavily broken down again to look like they'd never been washed, so I had to consistently distress the costumes to make them look like they belonged."

Twenty-nine-year-old Roberta, who comes from Liverpool, tells us: "Between tours, I come back to the city and divide my time working at Fabrication studio, where I do costume making for Mary Lamb and my own design work. Since working at



Roberta backstage with the head of Macbeth

the studio, I've made costumes for various Netflix dramas and Amazon productions. I've made items from kimonos to chef uniforms, to period silk dresses for a remake of *The Secret Garden*. After *Macbeth*, I made hazmat suits for Zara, an outdoor event with Walk the Plank and Mind the Gap."

Roberta's latest project is a return to musicals, as head of wardrobe for the new UK tour of *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* produced by Jason Donovan. "It's the biggest role I've undertaken, and I can't wait to get stuck in."

# The alumni network

Studying here offers you the opportunity to network from day one. A chance to meet like-minded people at the start of their careers and then work and develop together throughout your time here.

These connections and friendships often last long after you leave offering you a ready-made pool of talent and support to help you throughout your career, whether that be forming a band together or, hosting a day of one-act plays, as witnessed by Mark when he visited London to see *Six Plays, One Day* at the Tristan Bates Theatre, The Actors Centre.

## Mark's big day out



Stephen Smith and Matthew Bromwich

There was a moment when I emerged from Leicester Square tube station at two o'clock one February Saturday afternoon, when I wondered: what I am doing here? By near ten o'clock that night, I knew. Actually, I knew before three struck, which was part way through *To She or Not to She* co-written and performed by Emma Bentley (Acting, 2014). I was convinced it was an already published text, not an original work. Emma had also brilliantly networked with four others trained elsewhere.

The next show was an hour later, so I found myself in a pub around the corner from the Actors Centre, happily surrounded by four graduates explaining what the reality of an acting life was like. (I wondered, what with four breaks ahead, how I was going to stay on my feet.)

Backing up a bit: Matthew Bromwich and Stephen Smith (both Acting, 2017) had come up with the idea of featuring six shows on one day, with our graduates, in London.

Paul Daly (Acting, 2017) provided the second show, *The Story's End*, a solo piece he performed about

mental health and the misuse of drugs, blindfolding the audience, so we could only listen.

*Paved with Gold and Ashes* came next, a powerful ensemble piece with Grace Cherry, Louise Courtney, Amy Leeson, Emma Kniebe and Julia Thurston (all Acting, 2018) who also had written the piece.

Before the last show, *Poetry in Motion*, at eight thirty (a delightful, inimitable, rhyming show by Bethany Fox (Acting, 2016) with Oliver Burkill (Acting, 2016) in this two hander and Django Holder (Sound Technology, 2016) directing and sound designing), we watched a rather harrowing *Blasphemy*, directed by Jonah York starring Robyn Lovell, Matthew Bromwich (all Acting, 2017) and Katie Hamilton (Acting, 2018). That was followed by a grippingly energetic Berkoff double bill, *Dog/Actor*, mesmerizingly delivered and directed by Stephen Smith.

It was a landmark afternoon/evening, nothing less. We want, and will support, this to be a yearly event under Matthew and Stephen's leadership. As a Founder, I shall never forget this first outing. I am proud and grateful to them both.

## All together now

When Billie Van\* arrived at LIPA in 2009, she'd never met her fellow Norwegian Music students Jonas Alaska\*\* and Mikhael Paskalev\*\*\*. In the ten years since, they've regularly worked together and are about to release their first album as a band.

Recording under the name Hollywood since April 2018, they've already released four singles. Billie, who is from Asker and now based in Oslo, says: "Getting to know Jonas and Mik at LIPA turned out to be one of the best things that could have happened to me. We started playing and hanging out and have done ever since then, and Jonas and I have a son."

Since leaving us in 2011, all three pursued solo careers, releasing albums under their own names but continued to work together, helping out on each other's projects. Billie explains why they decided to form a band. "Being a solo artist and 'the boss' can be a bit lonely at times and scary too.

"Forming a band gave us a new drive and writing with others is different and challenging in a good way. I think we all needed that. Being a band, a gang, made it easier to do all the things we wanted to do, but didn't dare do in our solo projects."

Hollywood has a fourth LIPA graduate in their line-up, drummer Marius Simonsen (Music, 2005). The band has got their first live dates over the summer with their debut album to follow. Billie, who's 35-years-old, says: "I'm super excited and super nervous. I'm playing piano in the band and I'm practicing like crazy.

"We're finishing the album and rehearsing for the festival at the same time. It's a lot right now, but I'm looking forward to it."



At LIPA:

- \* Merete Pascual
- \*\* Jonas Aslaksen
- \*\*\* Jean Skaaden

# Florence fights for freedom

A recent government report included the estimate that there were some 13,000 victims of modern slavery in the UK. It's a shocking statistic that offers a narrow window on a worldwide problem. Helping those affected is a cause close to the heart of Florence McCudden, an outreach caseworker with charity City Hearts.

Until recently, the 24-year-old supported survivors in South Yorkshire. By helping to meet their material, physical and psychological needs, she enabled them to move on to lead independent, peaceful and fulfilling lives.

In May, Florence made the move to carry out the charity's work further afield, when she swapped the rain of Yorkshire for the blazing sun of Africa. "I'm working on the Emerging Voices project, which is an innovative research programme, using digital media and creative arts, to address the issues of slavery in Ghana. The participants are children and young people that City Hearts Africa supports. The project aims to equip them with the knowledge needed to build anti-slavery strategies. It also aims to measure the effectiveness of the use of heritage sites, artefacts and modern narratives in order to challenge slavery as a severe human rights abuse."

Florence, from Ripon, started volunteering with City Hearts in Liverpool in the final year of her studies, working with victims as part of her final project before graduating from our Community Drama programme in 2016. She began working for the charity in Yorkshire in September 2017.

"My training at LIPA helped me gain confidence to understand, meet and work with the most vulnerable of people. I have since



become really passionate about working with them using various skills, not just the creative arts, in order to help change their world and society for the better and create some impact towards their recovery in whatever way."

As well as giving the young people working with the project in Ghana a voice, she is clear about the need to raise awareness in the UK: "It's our public responsibility to help. There are some useful resources such as the Human Trafficking Foundation, Antislavery.org and the City Hearts website for more information."

# Ebony's a top girl

When Caryl Churchill wrote *Top Girls* in 1982, it reflected what it meant to be a woman at the time and the rise of Thatcherism. Fast forward nearly 40 years and it's been revived by the National Theatre, with Ebony Jonelle\* (FC Acting, 2015; Acting, 2018) among the cast.

Ebony tells us: "A lot of people have spoken about the play's relevance in regards to Brexit. Towards the end, there's a lot of talk about class and people working for the individual. Despite it being set in the 80s, a lot of the conversations we're having as a society today are similar."

Twenty-four-year-old Ebony, who comes from Newmarket in Suffolk, plays the waitress in the opening scene and understudies the roles of Angie, Kit and Shona. "It's been a lot to learn, but such a brilliant experience. With all the understudying, I'm involved in every scene, allowing me to work in close contact with the vast majority of the cast and being able to really see the production as a whole.

"We're a cast of all women and we get on like a house on fire. We all know we're part of something very special. Eighteen women taking a bow together every night on the Lyttelton stage is very empowering."

During rehearsals for *Top Girls*, which has received five-star reviews, Caryl Churchill even paid a few visits. "It was invaluable to the cast and Lyndsey Turner - our genius director. She was



Ebony in rehearsal for *Top Girls*. Photograph by Johan Persson

very generous with sharing her initial intentions and allowing the team to play with certain aspects of the text.

"I think it's the first professional production, where each character is played by an individual, as opposed to the cast being doubled and actors playing multiple roles. It's the way Caryl Churchill intended the play to be."

\* Ebony Chamberlain-King at LIPA

# The sounds of Shakespeare

Growing up near Stratford-upon-Avon, Jake Smith had the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) practically on his doorstep. Having been involved with the RSC since 2012, the Sound Technology (2016) graduate is now based there as a sound operator.

"I did my BTEC in Music Technology at Stratford-upon-Avon College and took a job in the restaurant and bar at the theatre to find my feet. I got chatting to someone from the sound department and mentioned I was interested in pursuing live sound." Jake ended up doing a four-week placement there before coming to study here.

The 25-year-old continued to work there during summer breaks and decided it was definitely the path he wanted to follow: "Having had the opportunity to work on projects in many disciplines as part of the Sound Technology course, I realised, in my second year, that theatre sound was what I really wanted to pursue. Being able to lean on the experience I'd had at the RSC at that time, solidified the direction I wanted to take my career in."

After graduation, Jake landed a fixed-term contract in the RSC's sound department, where he works with fellow Sound Technology graduate Claire Windsor (2004). Since then, he's worked on productions including *Twelfth Night*, *A Christmas Carol* and the UK tour of *Romeo and Juliet*.

Last year, Jake went to Washington DC with *Hamlet*. He tells us: "It was a fantastic experience, but also a challenge as the disciplines within theatre in the US do differ quite a lot to those in the UK."

He is currently sound operator for *The Provoked Wife* (alongside 2016 TPT graduate Aimee Woods) and *Venice Preserved*. Later this year, he'll be part of the technical team bringing the anticipated adaptation of David Walliams' *The Boy in the Dress* to the stage, with music by Robbie Williams and Guy Chambers (a LIPA Companion).



Jake in the RSC's Swan Theatre

# Snapshots

## 2015 Graduates

Welcome to the eighteenth edition of Snapshots, a series of alumni newsletter supplements providing short profiles of graduates from LIPA's Higher Education programmes, nearly four years after they graduated.

The 2016 graduate supplement will be issued with next summer's edition of LIPA's alumni newsletter. Graduates will be contacted in spring 2020, however, you can update your profile at any time by ringing Jan Buchanan in alumni relations on +44 (0)151 330 3261, by emailing [alumni@lpa.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@lpa.ac.uk) or by writing to The Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts, Mount Street, Liverpool L1 9HF, UK.

The graduates featured in this edition of Snapshots studied one of the following Higher Education programmes running in 2015:

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**BA (Hons) Acting**

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**BA (Hons) Community Drama**

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**BA (Hons) Dance**

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**BA (Hons) Music**

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**BA (Hons) Music, Theatre and Entertainment Management**

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**BA (Hons) Sound Technology**

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**BA (Hons) Theatre and Performance Design**

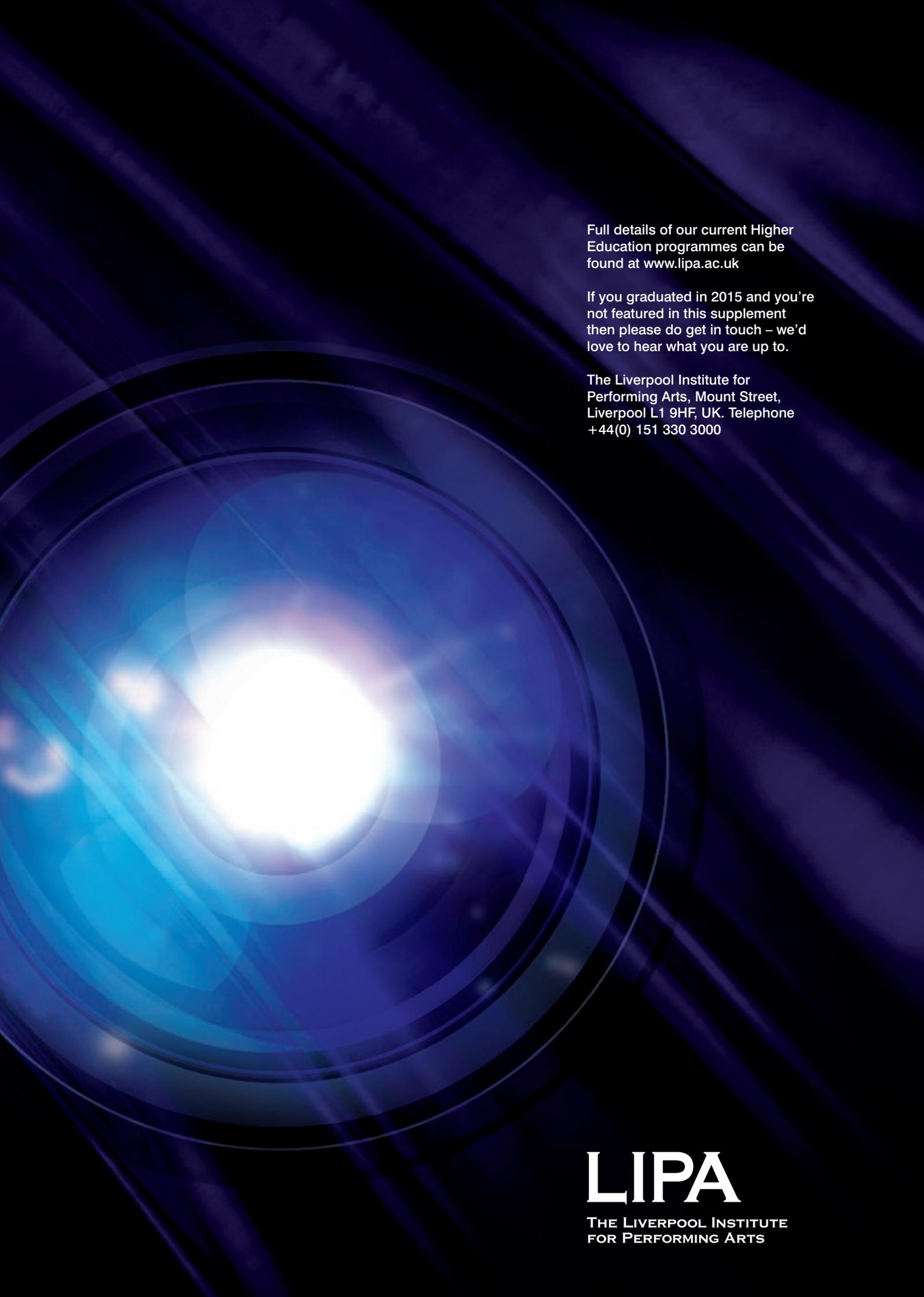
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**BA (Hons) Theatre and Performance Technology**

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# LIPA

THE LIVERPOOL INSTITUTE  
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Full details of our current Higher Education programmes can be found at [www.lipa.ac.uk](http://www.lipa.ac.uk)

If you graduated in 2015 and you're not featured in this supplement then please do get in touch – we'd love to hear what you are up to.

The Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts, Mount Street, Liverpool L1 9HF, UK. Telephone +44(0) 151 330 3000

**LIPA**

THE LIVERPOOL INSTITUTE  
FOR PERFORMING ARTS

# Enterprise news

Some 76 percent of those working in the creative and performing arts industries are self-employed. That's why the ability to create and manage your own work is a cornerstone of our curriculum.

According to our records around 160 new businesses have been started by our graduates. Here is one of the recent ones, alongside two of the more established enterprises.

## Starting from scratch

When rehearsing at home with his band became too much for his family, drummer Adam Trevor had to find somewhere else to practice. The solution became the catalyst for his own business.

Adam (PMST, 2015) decided to build a rehearsal room in the family garden. It was to be the start of Scratch Studio, Adam says: "When I was practising with my band, I realised there weren't enough affordable recording opportunities. So, using the skills I developed while studying, I started to record the tracks and master them myself.

"Then I realised that I could offer this out to other bands and musicians."

Based in West Derby, Liverpool, Scratch Studio opened for business in 2017. It offers an in-house service from start to finish: from the initial recording, to taking photos of the session, mixing and mastering the tracks and printing the CDs. In 2018, Adam successfully applied for a grant from our Graduate Business Development Fund. "The money really enabled me to push on



Adam, left, with clients Dave Robertson and Damon C Scott from Storm Queen

with the business. I was able to put more investment into marketing and upgrade my equipment."

But it wasn't just the money that helped. "The application process, including putting together a business case, helped me to plan and develop strategies for the future."

Scratch Studios continues to grow. It has recently started to work on spoken word recordings and taken its equipment on the road to record bigger groups and choirs. Adam, who also studied at Edge Hill University, says: "LIPA has helped me to understand that you need to take every opportunity available to you in this industry.

"You also have to create opportunities for yourself and be proactive."

## Problem solver

Two years of freelancing was enough for Chris Bogg (TPT, 2003) to spot a business opportunity. "After working for several different hire companies, I realised that there was a gap in the local market for a rental company with the highest standards.

"Companies existed in the corporate sector but in theatre, live music and events the standards of equipment and staff were lower and seemed to lack attention to detail."



In 2005, Chris, who is from Warrington, founded specialist audio and lighting hire company dBS Solutions, providing support and equipment to the entertainment, sports and event industry. Chris says. "Building your own business is very much 50 percent doing the work and 50 percent networking. Talking and helping people find a solution to their problems, this is the bit I feel makes all the difference."

As well as being managing director at Warrington based dBS Solutions, Chris is also a successful sound designer. His credits include: *Legally Blonde*, UK tour; *Spamalot*, UK, South Korea and Dubai and the premiere of *We'll Live and Die in These Towns* at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry.

Later this year, dBS Solutions will be supplying equipment for a full season of theatre for an 800-seater marquee, a first for the company, with Chris sound designer for the two largest productions. The company will also be supporting up to seven Christmas shows, making 2019 one of their busiest years yet.

## Seamless

A successful work placement can lead to employment and the start of a career. But Management graduate Chris Meehan (2006) can trace the start of his success to a placement that never happened. "My third-year work placement fell through. So, I convinced our lecturers to let us start up our own business instead."

The idea was to use technology to create an easier way for artists to engage with publishing and once given the go-ahead, Chris worked with fellow Management student and co-founder Phil Cooper (Management, 2006) devising a business plan for Sentric Music Publishing.

After the placement ended, they returned to LIPA and by the time Chris finished the course in May, he was ready to start full-time at Sentric. "It was seamless."

Thirteen years on and Sentric looks after the music of over 150,000 songwriters representing over 1.3m songs. With offices in the UK, Europe and the USA, it's been nominated as Publisher of the Year at the Music Week Awards five times and won two BMI awards for Drake's *One Dance*.

Chris believes as well as learning the practicalities needed to start a business, LIPA also gave him the belief to do so. "You create a business plan and are then given the chance to manage that as a real project.

"That, and working on outside projects, gave you the confidence to know that you could do it."





Hot City Horns backstage with Paul McCartney and his band. Paul first left, Kenji sixth left and Mike first right. Photography: MPL Communications/IMJ Kim

## Ticket to ride

"We started in the crowd and as we made our way to the stage, Jon Bon Jovi winked at us and Chris Rock fist pumped us." Paul Burton (Music, 2008), who along with fellow Music graduate Mike Davis (2008), makes up two-thirds of Hot City Horns, is recalling their first live performance on stage with Paul McCartney. "Then to get into position, we had to budge Meryl Streep out of the way."

The show was at Grand Central Station, New York last year as part of the publicity campaign for Paul McCartney's number one album *Egypt Station*. Mike says: "Seeing the reaction of the crowd outside the station, performing live with Paul for the first time and the show being streamed live on YouTube is something we won't forget."

Paul (trombone), Mike (trumpet) and third member Kenji Fenton (saxophone) were first approached about joining the Freshen Up tour by Paul McCartney's musical director and keyboard player Paul 'Wix' Wickens. Paul Burton explains: "We worked with him a few years ago for a charity concert at the Royal Albert Hall with Paul Weller, Deep Purple and Bruce Dickinson."

"Then last year he made contact. We met for a coffee and discussed how Paul was wanting to add brass to the gig for the upcoming tour and it all happened from there."

The Freshen Up tour started in Canada in September last year and has so far visited Japan, Europe, South America and USA.

Mike and Paul first met Paul McCartney at their graduation ceremony, Mike says: "We've spoken with Paul a few times about it and he thinks it's great. We've even shown him our graduation 'handshake' pictures."

They believe their time here and what they learnt played an important role in them being asked to join him on tour. Paul says: "As was shown by Paul's MD contacting us a few years after working with him, an important lesson is that you never know how one bit of work will affect your future. It's so important to always give your all to anything you do."

"LIPA was also a great platform to meet like-minded people and we still regularly work with people we met there."

## Kick-start for Jung dancer

'That which we do not bring to consciousness, appears in our lives as fate.' The quote, from Carl Jung, proved inspirational to Mathilde Caeyers. It was the spark that led her to create *Eksogen\**, a contemporary dance project that has received Norwegian Arts Council funding to the tune of £20,000.

Mathilde tells us: "*Eksogen* will be a contemporary dance performance with integrated live video design and electronic music. We are a team of three dancers (Intakt Dance), a musician, a lighting and video designer, a producer and a stage designer. *Eksogen* aims to explore whether there is a potential for violence in every human body. It will be an abstract interpretation of human consciousness through the philosophical lens of Carl Jung."

The project was made possible, when our 2018 Dance graduate, who was born in Antwerp, but has lived most of her life in Tromsø, took part in UREDD, a mentoring programme in the north of Norway. Aimed at young artists at the start of their careers, it sets out to boost personal growth, while offering support in practical skills such as budgeting and marketing. Encouraged by her mentor, Mathilde completed 15 funding applications. She didn't expect to be successful with any of them, so she was delighted to receive the grant.

As part of the award, Intakt Dance and the team spent two weeks in a dance residency with Dansearena Nord to start creating the show.

They were also allocated a producer to spend 12 months with them to develop the work.

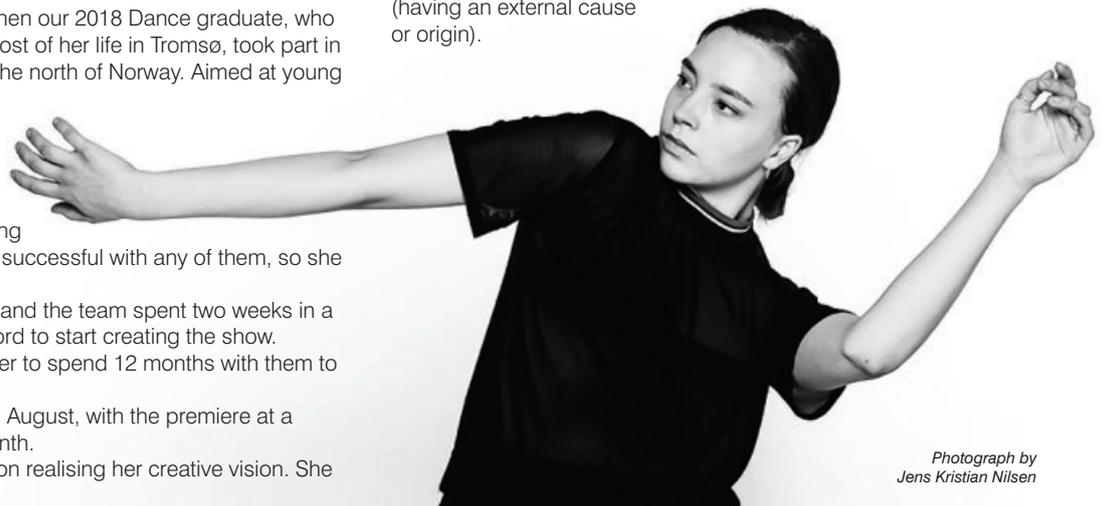
Rehearsals for *Eksogen* will start in August, with the premiere at a Tromsø theatre on the 31st of the month.

Mathilde, 24, is now working hard on realising her creative vision. She

feels the weight of responsibility on her shoulders, but she is thrilled to get this opportunity so soon: "I came out of LIPA with the tools to be able to confidently jump into a professional career: a variety of techniques, a good work ethic, versatility, social skills and the confidence in my personal artistry. LIPA also showed me the process of creating large scale stage productions on a professional level."

And those other funding applications paid off - she also received two miscellaneous grants worth £8,000 to go to professional dance workshops around Europe.

\**Eksogen* translates as exogenous (having an external cause or origin).



Photograph by Jens Kristian Nilsen

## Living in the (magic) moment

"It's all about living in the moment," for Ferne Collins (Community Drama, 2015), that's the essence of what she wants to achieve in her workshops for people with dementia. The two-hour sessions, part of Small Things Theatre Company's Storybox project, are delivered in care homes, libraries and hospices.

She explains what her role as a facilitator involves: "Each session has a theme, for example, a day at the beach would involve us dressing up, taking along flags and other sensory objects. Along with the participants, we then come up with creative ideas for stories, songs and poems. Some of the people we work with are brilliant at improvisation, others might just raise their head to see what's going on. We don't do reminiscence work, so there is no pressure on anyone to try to remember anything, not even their own name."

Encouraging those taking part to just enjoy the present brings its own magic moments. "We did a session with a Hollywood theme and, at the end of it, one of our ladies stood up and gave a lovely speech thanking everyone for coming along to the premiere. Her carer told us later how astonished she was – the woman hadn't spoken for months."

It's the variety of working with clients of all ages and from all sectors of society that Ferne enjoys most. She recently worked on a theatre for democracy project for looked-after young people and care leavers in Oldham. Over twelve weeks, they put together and rehearsed a show about what they wanted to do next with their lives, culminating in a performance in front of social workers and council staff early this year. She says that the ability to go out into the community and create her own work is crucial in her field and one of the most important things that she learnt from her time here.

Aside from her freelance projects, the busy 26-year-old also works six days a week as a director and workshop leader at a Footlights theatre school in Manchester and delivers sessions at local schools.

## Quick, send in the clowns

If you are looking for a quick-change artist, Benjamin Stratton\* is your man. In March, he was one of just four actors bringing over 100 roles to life in *The 39 Steps* at Lyric Theatre, Belfast.

"I was one of the two clowns who cover a multitude of characters throughout the play. We had to form a strong chemistry during rehearsals to be a believable vaudevillian double act. My roles ranged from a music hall compere to a sheriff to a villainous German professor to an extremely excitable old Scottish lady. We had quick changes, that had to take less than three seconds, before coming back onstage in a different costume with a different accent. If you missed a costume change or a run-around, the whole show was in trouble.

"My final change was running off as the villain, throwing my costume at the amazing costume girls, putting on a Sherlock Holmes-style costume and running the entire length of the theatre around the front of house to re-enter in the audience in around 30 seconds."

Ben (Acting, 2012) has become an expert at playing multiple characters. His previous

credits include *Potted Potter*, which compresses the seven Harry Potter novels into seventy minutes and *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged) Revised*. It's a very specific genre of physical comedy that requires skills in clowning, movement and improvisation.

Versatile Ben, who is from Oxford, also has ambitions to write and direct. His play *Once a Coward* was recently performed as a rehearsed reading at the Arts Theatre, West End. Ultimately, he would love to write and direct films.

When we caught up with the 30-year-old, he was auditioning and spending time on his writing. He offers sage advice to worried actors looking for that elusive next role. "The auditioning, the travelling to castings and the constant rejections are the WORK. That is your JOB. When you get that one yes in ten noes, then you can do what you were meant to do. Social media is very deceptive, people post about their successes, but not their failures."

\*Benjamin Watts at LIPA



Ben, left and the rest of the cast

## Welcome to the house of fun continued from page 1

This can include comedy sketches, songs, raps, dances, storytelling, puppetry and make-and-do demonstrations. Twenty-six-year-old Evie says she often relies on skills learnt at LIPA to help her. "The improvisation classes we did have been really useful, especially when performing comedy sketches. We also learnt not to take

ourselves too seriously, which is important."

One year into the job, Evie continues to have "the best time" at CBeebies and, looking ahead, hopes to continue as a presenter. "It's actually quite nice to add elements of your own personality on screen, but of course you are a heightened version of yourself."

# Memories of Her's

In March this year, we lost two outstanding graduates Stephen Fitzpatrick and Audun Laading. The pair, who had formed the band Her's together, were killed along with their manager Trevor Engelbrektson in a crash while travelling to a gig in California.

Stephen, from Barrow-in-Furness and Audun - from Flekkeroy, Norway - met here in 2013. They formed Her's in 2015 with Audun on bass and Stephen, originally a drummer, on guitar. Head of Music Martin Isherwood says: "Stephen was a great drummer and was in so many bands here. We were all surprised when he got up on stage as a singer and a guitarist in Her's with Audun."

By 2016 they'd already started to attract a following. Tim Pike was Audun's bass tutor in his final year. "In their third year, they were able to concentrate on the band as a career. They were doing festivals and a lot of gigs around town. I remember them doing a great gig at The Zube Xtra. They had the drum machine (affectionately known as Pierce Brosnan) on a stool as a third member of the band and it was Audun's job to start and stop it. Occasionally, he messed it up - which was all part of the experience and charm."

After leaving us in 2016, a series of headline gigs and festival performances in Liverpool were followed by a UK tour and a contract with record company Heist or Hit. In 2017, they released their mini compilation album *Songs of Her's*. The NME commended the collection and how they managed to "shift and float between sounds. Never really fitting into one genre, but somehow nailing whatever they end up doing."

At the start of 2018, Stephen was nominated by LIPA for a UK Music Outstanding Graduate Award (the Music department had wanted to nominate both Stephen and Audun, but the rules stipulated only one name be put forward). In August, they released their first full length album *Invitation to Her's* which earned them praise from *The Guardian*, who marked them as 'One to watch.'

Spring 2019, saw a return to SXSW Festival, including a filmed performance for BBC Introducing, followed by a full US Tour. It was towards the end of that 19-date tour that they and their manager died after their vehicle was involved in a head on collision on 26 March.

Martin Isherwood remembers Stephen, who was 24 and 25-year-old Audun as, "just the funniest, sweetest, loveliest, most creative lads you can ever meet. They were just so down to earth." He believes they had an exciting future to look forward to. "The songs are just great and we all thought that they were going to be one of the biggest things out of Liverpool. They were just such lovely boys with so much ahead of them."



Stephen and Audun performing at The Zube Xtra in 2016

# Celebrating culture in Coventry

In 2021, Coventry will become the UK City of Culture. It's a great source of pride for Lolli Fallon (Community Drama, 2012), who is company manager for Imagineer Productions and Open Theatre - both based in the city. "I am from Coventry, so being able to work in my hometown in time for 2021 is extremely important for me."

Twenty-eight-year-old Lolli explains: "Open Theatre uses a non-verbal theatre approach with Young People with Learning Disabilities (YPWLD). We wholeheartedly believe in the ability of YPWLD to contribute to the creative and cultural life of the places where they live."

"Imagineer Productions specialises in cultural events and celebrations, whose ambitious work combines imagination, creativity, engineering and spectacle." Best-known for the landmark Cultural Olympiad project, *Godiva Awakes*, Imagineer creates extraordinary outdoor work.



Lolli hangs out in the aerial rig

Lolli's role encompasses producing and project management, operations, HR, relationship management and logistics. She feels her training here has stood her in good stead. "Although many of us didn't appreciate it at the time, 'Raising Funds and Managing Finance' has been invaluable. The knowledge and ethos that LIPA staff instilled in us has also been vital to my career."

Before joining the two companies earlier this year, Lolli was learning and participation manager at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre. There, she worked with Melissa Daly (Acting, 2008) and regularly worked with Jay Crutchley (Community Drama, 2003). She recently contracted Jay to work on an Open Theatre project with a special school in Birmingham. Melissa has since also joined Open Theatre part-time.

Lolli is now focusing on a new project with Imagineer called *BRIDGE*. "It's a large-scale, ambitious outdoor arts project celebrating the intersection of art and engineering. It will be a spectacular circus-inspired, physical theatre performance brought to life by outstanding artists." *BRIDGE* will be seen in Coventry later this year.

# Knight flyer



Dancer Charlie Knight's career is off to a flying start. The 2016 Dance graduate has choreographed for top dance agency Love Rudeye and helped put together a show performed at the Beijing National

Theatre. Now he is one of the featured dancers in gothic rock spectacular *Bat Out of Hell the Musical* at the Metronom Theater in Oberhausen.

Charlie started a year-long contract with

the Jim Steinman show, choreographed by Emma Portner and Mark Naylor, last September. He performs a mixture of contemporary and commercial hip hop numbers against a background of pyrotechnics, revving engines and those famous rock classics.

The 26-year-old, originally from Chesterfield, lives between Düsseldorf and London. After signing with Love Rudeye he was mentored by acclaimed choreographer, Christina Andrea, as part of their LR Mentor programme. He then went on to choreograph for the agency.

His chance to work in China came when dance lecturer, Jacqueline Shi, enlisted his help to choreograph a show for the Chinese government to promote dance and drama for the Chinese school curriculum. The show, performed by students, had the desired effect.

Charlie credits Jacqui with developing his onstage skills: "Her second-year show really brought out a performance aspect of me I'd never utilised before. LIPA also taught me to treat every person I meet in the industry with the same respect as the director or choreographer."

# Dr in the house

When Francesca Peschier developed a problem with her vision, she was forced to reconsider her career as a model maker and scenic designer. She made a full recovery, but was told to avoid strong chemicals for a year, even superglue – the most vital tool of the trade.

Francesca applied to graduate school on a whim and ended up studying for a master of research followed by a PhD in scenography and visual identity in regional theatre.

Now Dr Peschier is acting head of new works at Liverpool Everyman & Playhouse, which she describes as 'the best job in the world'.

The main focus of her role is scouting for new talent. This includes seeing work across the North West and reviewing script submissions, then bringing exciting new artists in-house and helping them take their work to the next stage. She also produces showcases, rehearsed readings and the monthly Scratch Studio and oversees the Young Everyman & Playhouse Writers. In addition, she teaches The Playwrights' Programme.

Francesca (Theatre & Performance Design, 2010) is passionate about the importance of academic research in the performing arts: "If we don't write our own histories and the theoretical boundaries of what we do – then who will? The arts are facing terrible cuts. If we are stuck in this situation, where we constantly have to prove the vital worth of arts to society and culture,

then being able to analyse and talk about what we do is essential."

Of her training here she says: "LIPA gave you space to experiment and make mistakes. The model of TPDT really prepared you for the industry. The most important thing I think I learnt is: it's not always about being the best in the room. You can be amazing at what you do but if you are difficult to get along with then you will struggle in the arts."

Francesca, from Croydon, continues to develop the academic side of her career.

She writes and reviews for *The Stage* and *Exeunt*. Alongside Liverpool John Moores University, she is in the early stages of a research bid to work with the Liverpool Theatre Archives. She is also in preliminary talks for a potential collaborative project looking at the ecology of theatre criticism in Las Vegas.

And, for budding playwrights and theatre makers, she has an invitation: "We have a lovely Writers' Room at the Everyman, full of scripts, that is free to use. Take a wander up Hope Street and come see me."

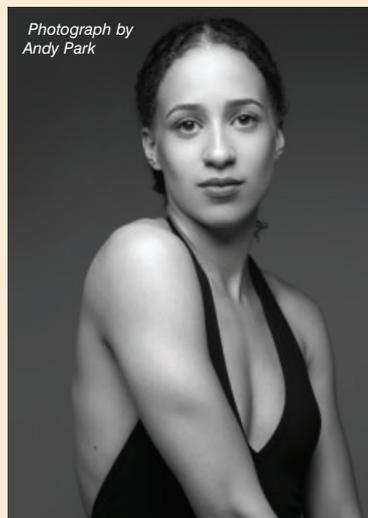


## Olivia gets ready to roar

A year after graduating, Olivia Jones (FC Commercial Dance, 2015; Dance, 2018) is preparing to join the cast of one of her favourite stage musicals – as an ensemble member of the UK and Ireland tour of *The Lion King*.

“Finding out I’d been cast was surreal. Landing a job in my favourite show almost straight out of training is so exciting – I feel extremely blessed to have this opportunity to fulfil a huge ambition of mine.”

The Windsor-based dancer tells us how inspired she was, the first time she saw the show: “It’s a timeless story and I found it mesmerising as it came to life in front of my eyes. I greatly admired the dancers: their technical ability, strength, dynamics and characterisation really brought the show together for me.”



Photograph by  
Andy Park

Starting among hundreds of hopefuls in January with an open call, the audition process lasted three months with two rounds of call-backs. Twenty-four-year-old Olivia says her training with us helped secure the role. “My four years at LIPA were vital in providing me with the tools and skills needed to be able to audition for a production such as *The Lion King*. The extremely high level of technical training underpins everything I do as a dancer. This, combined with the invaluable knowledge of the professional world, taught through mock auditions and lectures, gave me the ability to sustain myself through the long audition process.”

The tour opens at the Bristol Hippodrome on 7th September, where Olivia will perform with an international cast from Brazil, Hong Kong, Jamaica, South Africa and the United States, among others. “I’m also looking forward to working with an incredible creative team, all top specialists in their fields. Being able to work alongside them and learn from them is an invaluable experience.”

## Update from our founder



Sunshine and showers – that sums up 18/19. Our Sixth Form College had been inspected. We were waiting in the canteen for the result, Charles, our Sixth Form Director, arrived (he’d been an actor, so no trace on his face). He told us that that we’d scored ‘Outstanding’ in every category. We leapt to our feet to hug and cheer. Within moments, everyone eating round us was also cheering, having *no* idea what the excitement was about. If that doesn’t capture our vibe, I don’t know what does. A sunshine moment.

Another one was the graduate acting festival that Matthew and Stephen created (I’ve described my reactions on page 7), all the more sunshiny because, for some reason, I didn’t anticipate what I was about to experience. And on the acting front, the quality of auditionees has prompted us to recruit two groups starting this September, as well as 18, who will be receiving enhanced screen acting skills in our new TV studio.

‘Our new TV studio’? Yes. Over the summer our Sennheiser Studio Theatre is being converted. So, for the next teaching year onwards, the new studio theatre in our art building will become what the SST used to be. And be named after George Harrison, the only remaining Beatle, who studied in our buildings, not recognised with a space named after him.

We’ve had another year of inspiring “Conversations with” that have included Rowan Atkinson, Gary Barlow, Peter Capaldi, Maxine Peake and Stephen Fry.

Also, over the summer, we are building an extension into the courtyard between our two historic buildings for more teaching spaces, that will include another good size rehearsal space ... a bit like 4.24.

Before starting on the showers, it’s always an uplift to attend one of your reunions (this year from those who left between 2011 and 2013), as well as our graduate panel, who inform incoming students what working life is like and our discipline specific See Me Now events for our second years. When I say at graduation that this is what staff live for and why LIPA was created, I mean it.

One shower is our continuing battle to recover the additional money we used to receive for high cost teaching that was removed. Very much on the plus side (and as mentioned last time), the UK Parliamentary Ombudsman is investigating what went on. Paul has backed our publicity campaign, which started in the *Financial Times*, no less. Among other words, he said: “LIPA is my passion and a part of my legacy. It would not be fair to allow injustice to affect its future.”

The other has been that our bid to start a High School (11-16) has currently been turned down. We discovered that the reason was a difference between the way government assesses pupil capacity in any UK city and the way UK cities calculate the same thing. Into battle again. We deeply want youngsters to have a brilliant learning journey from 4 to 24.

This magazine is a celebration of your lives. To have been a part of your life, even for a short time, is a wonderful thing.



# Golden Years

We welcomed back alumni who graduated from 2011 to 2013 for a reunion event on October 20th. The pull of meeting up with old friends and sinking a few pints in our bar drew graduates from as far away as Gdansk in Poland and Oregon and Georgia in the USA (picture 1), as well as a number from Norway. Guests enjoyed chatting with the lovely ladies from our canteen over the buffet (picture 2) and catching up with teaching staff (pictures 3-5). Some were persuaded to pose in our photo booth for a memento of the evening (picture 6). We ended the night with a visit to our Arts School lecture theatre to share a lively viewing of graduation videos (picture 7).



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## Contacting the Editor

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Thanks to all the graduates and staff who contributed to this edition, including writers Jan Buchanan, Mark Featherstone-Witty, Charli McCann and Joe Norman. The opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of the Institute and we reserve the right to edit any material.

# Graduation 2019

We are awarding Companionships to nine people, who have shared their skills and expertise with us, as well as recognising our thirteenth Honoured Friend.

## Companions



### Rowan Atkinson

Rowan is an actor, comedian and writer. He came to national prominence on the BBC comedy show *Not the Nine O'Clock News*, winning a BAFTA for his performances in 1981, the same year he was awarded an Olivier Award for his live show, *Rowan Atkinson in Revue*. He co-created and starred in *Blackadder*, which earned him another BAFTA in 1990 and *Mr Bean*, with *Mr Bean* broadcast globally on 245 TV channels. In 2010,

Rowan was nominated for an Olivier Award for his portrayal of Fagin in *Oliver!* Last year, he starred as Johnny English for a third time in the film *Johnny English Strikes Again*.



### Mike Batt

Mike is a composer, arranger, conductor and producer. He created the pop group The Wombles, who were the UK's most successful singles band in 1974. Mike wrote and produced Art Garfunkel's international 1979 number one single *Bright Eyes*, for which he received one of his five Ivor Novello Awards. His record label Dramatico, which he founded in 2000, became one of the UK's leading independents, selling 11

million records with his protege Katie Melua, including the singles *The Closest Thing to Crazy* and *Nine Million Bicycles* – which he wrote and produced. Mike is currently working on a new solo album, an autobiography and several musicals.



### Lucy Carter

Lucy is an award-winning lighting designer with over 20 years of experience of designing for dance, opera and theatre. In 2004, she won the Olivier Award for Dance for *2 Human*. She's a two-time winner of the Knight of Illumination Award for Dance for *Chroma* (2008) and *Woolf Works* (2015) for the Royal Ballet. In 2013, she was awarded the TMA Achievement Award in Opera for *Lohengrin* and, last year, received the Critics' Circle National

Dance Award for Outstanding Contribution to Dance. Her recent credits include *Katya Kabanova* at The Royal Opera House, *Home, I'm Darling* in the West End and *Woolf Works* at Teatro alla Scala.



### Stephen Fry

Stephen is a writer, actor, comedian and broadcaster. With Hugh Laurie, he created the BBC comedy *A Bit of Fry and Laurie* and the pair took the lead roles in ITV's *Jeeves and Wooster*. Other acting credits include TV shows *Blackadder* and *Kingdom*. While his film credits include *Wilde*, *Gosford Park* and two Hobbit films, *The Desolation of Smaug* and *The Battle of the Five Armies*.

Stephen wrote and presented the Emmy Award-winning documentary *The Secret Life of The Manic Depressive* and is a former presenter of BBC comedy quiz *QI*. He is about to embark on his first live tour for 40 years, *Mythos A Trilogy: Gods. Heroes. Men*.



### Sue Gill

Sue is an author, facilitator, photographer, workshop leader, secular celebrant and musician with over 40 years of experience of working in celebratory theatre in diverse communities. In 1968, she co-founded Welfare State International (WSI), an arts and installation collective, who were one of the pioneers of staging large-scale outdoor events away from theatres and art galleries. Sue was course leader of WSI and Bristol University's

MA in Cultural Performance (1998 - 2006). She is co-founder and co-author of the Dead Good Guides to funerals and naming ceremonies. Sue currently runs celebratory theatre masterclasses across the world and leads Rites of Passage Summer Schools in the UK.



### Steve Lewis

Steve is a music and media consultant with nearly 50 years of music industry experience. He was hired, while still at school, by Richard Branson in 1969 to join his fledgling company, Virgin. He remained there until 1992, having run its artist management company, been deputy managing director of Virgin Records and finally in charge of Virgin Music (Publishers) Ltd. Steve was then CEO of the Music Division of Chrysalis Group and was

instrumental in making Chrysalis Music the UK's top independent publisher. In 2003, he set up the first equity-backed music publisher Stage Three Music. Steve continues to work as a music publisher and consultant.



### Tom Pye

Tom is a set and costume designer, production designer and art director. His theatrical work has taken him to Broadway with *Long Day's Journey into Night*, *The Testament of Mary* and *Fiddler on the Roof*, for which he was nominated for a Tony Award. His West End credits include *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, *A Christmas Carol* and *Sinatra*. Tom was set designer for the Olivier Award-winning *Philip Glass' Akhnaten* for the ENO/Los Angeles

Opera. Recent ballet credits include *Anna Karenina*, Joffrey Ballet, Chicago and *The Nutcracker*, Atlanta Ballet. Among his most recent TV work was his costume design for Sally Wainwright's BBC/HBO drama *Gentleman Jack*.



### Kenrick Sandy

Award-winning dancer, choreographer and teacher, Kenrick 'H2O' Sandy is co-founder and co-artistic director of dance troupe and entertainment company Boy Blue and associate artist at the Barbican, London. As a choreographer his credits include the 2017 Olivier nominated *Blak Whyte Gray*, the 2017 Olivier Award-winning *Pied Piper: A Hip-Hop Dance Revolution* and the Danny Boyle directed film *T2 Trainspotting*. Kenrick had

previously collaborated with Danny for the London 2012 Olympic Opening Ceremony and was choreographer for the closing Winter Paralympic 2014 Ceremony. A former UK Street Dance champion, Kenrick was a judge on the first series of *BBC Young Dancer* in 2015, returning this year as choreographer.



### Andrew Scheps

Andrew is an award-winning producer, sound engineer and mixer. He has mixed and engineered some of the biggest rock bands in the world, including Green Day, Metallica, U2, Linkin Park, Audioslave, Hozier and Black Sabbath, as well as working with Johnny Cash, Neil Diamond and Iggy Pop. Andrew has been awarded three GRAMMYS for his work with Adele, Red Hot Chili Peppers and Ziggy Marley and, in 2012, was named International

Engineer of the Year by the Music Producers Guild. Andrew now mixes almost exclusively on computer and has developed three award-winning software plug-ins. In 2015, he relocated to the UK from Los Angeles.

## Honoured Friend



### Cliff Cooper

Cliff is CEO and founder of Orange Music Electronic Co. Ltd. He started the business in 1968, when he began selling used equipment to support his recording studio. When the major distributors refused to supply him, he started to design and build his own amplifiers and speaker cabinets naming them Orange. The company now has factories in the UK, the USA and China. It exports to over 110 countries

worldwide and has been awarded the Queen's Award for Enterprise and International Trade (Export) three times. His other business interests have included artist management, publishing, consumer electronics and The Beatles Story, Liverpool.

# LIPA

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