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Ben, pictured at the bottom, with pal Yorick. Photograph by Karl Andre Photography

Ben in tights

For many actors, a leading role with the RSC would be the pinnacle of a long and illustrious career. Benjamin Stratton* has achieved this remarkable feat at the age of 24. In this instance, though, RSC stands for Reduced Shakespeare Company and Ben is one of just four actors on tour bringing *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged) [revised]* to life – in just 90 minutes.

July will see Ben make his West End debut as the show opens at the Leicester Square Theatre. The 2012 Acting graduate tells us: "At the end of the show, we do a fast-paced version of *Hamlet* and then do it again... in reverse."

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Kelly's career path heads in One Direction

Kelly Murray is working with one of the UK's biggest boy bands after her placement at Simon Cowell's Syco Entertainment led to a full-time job.

The 24-year-old is junior product manager for One Direction, who shot to fame after reaching the 2010 finals of *The X-Factor*.

Kelly promotes the act in the UK, which involves working closely with radio and TV pluggers and band managers and designers, among other stakeholders.

The job is a dream come true for the 2012 Management graduate and pop music lover, who was a marketing intern and later hired because of the knowledge she had amassed.

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Kelly with a One Direction plaque celebrating the band's album *Take Me Home* reaching the top of the UK charts



Photograph by Dana Kinsky/Michael Grier

Django joy for Dror

When you watch the Academy Award-winning action film *Django Unchained*, pay particular attention to the unique echoes, stylized horse sounds and sound design transitions.

These, and others like them, are the work of Dror Mohar, who was sound editor on the film, directed by Quentin Tarantino.

Dror (Sound Technology, 2006) spent long hours in the studio creating sounds for *Django* using unique recordings he engineered specifically for the movie in canyons, forests and deserts.

"Sound is invisible and as designers we can choose to choreograph it any way we want," says Dror. "The goal is to connect an audience to a story, to suspend disbelief and to make audiences forget they're watching a movie – not simply to paint with cool sounds."

"We identify sounds that have intrinsic meaning in the context of the story and orchestrate them to create the voice of the movie."

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Notes for the stage



David with cast members of the Bochum, Germany production of *Starlight Express*

Working for one of Britain's most successful modern composers has its advantages. Watching how he weaves his creative magic is one of them.

That's what David Wilson gets to do in his job with the Really Useful Group, the production and management company established by the theatre luminary Lord Andrew Lloyd Webber.

Based in offices in London's Covent Garden, David (*Music*, 2009) helps look after the music used in West End, international and touring productions of Lord Lloyd Webber's musicals. That means everything from minor score changes to full re-orchestrations.

The 25-year-old also gets to collaborate on new projects. He tells us: "We've recently been working on Andrew's new musical based on Stephen Ward and the Profumo affair scandal of the 1960s.

"We workshopped the musical, which was a very exciting experience for me. It was amazing to see Andrew creating something from scratch and to watch it all come together."

As well as being involved with the *Jesus Christ Superstar* world arena tour starring Tim Minchin, Melanie C and Chris Moyles, David has worked on the score for the futuristic musical *Starlight Express*. What started out as a three-song musical freshen up evolved into a full re-orchestration.

Pianist David explains "*Starlight Express* is essentially a pop show and Andrew has updated the music several times, since its release in 1984. I worked very closely with him and the director, Arlene Phillips, who are both very interested in keeping up to date with musical styles for this show. Anyway, he was so pleased with the three songs we did, that we ended up doing more and more until it became the whole show!"

When not working with Lord Lloyd Webber, David develops his own projects.

He has created a new musical on the troubled life of *The Wind in the Willows* author Kenneth Grahame, in collaboration with David Hutchinson (*Acting*, 2009) and Katie McIvor* (*Acting*, 2010). The show, *Sincerely, Mr Toad*, is due to debut this August at the Edinburgh Fringe before touring the UK with Sell a Door Productions, a company co-founded by David Hutchinson.

David Wilson, originally from Harrogate, tells us: "Writing *Sincerely, Mr Toad* was a completely new experience for me as I'd only really written pop music before. But I was very inspired to do something different after working so closely with Andrew."

On top of all this, David performs in pop band, Untouched, with fellow graduate Fiona McDougal (*Music*, 2010). They supported N-Dubz on their latest tour and are currently preparing for the release of their new EP, *When the Night Comes*, this summer.

*Katie Williamson at LIPA

Costume is Jeannette's forte

Most people struggle to keep their own wardrobes in order, so spare a thought for Jeannette Juergens.

Jeannette (Theatre and Performance Design, 1998) is head of Berlin State Opera's cavernous costume depot, a highly ordered Aladdin's cave of theatrical attire.

Working alongside production teams, performers and wardrobe, Jeannette ensures the costumes and accessories for each show are ready – and delivered – on time.

And there is lots to keep her busy, as Jeannette explains: "I manage and maintain the costumes for 50 operas and eight ballets, along with thousands of other costumes, even suits of armour and a unique collection of period costumes covering five eras of German theatre history."

Other roles include putting together new costume ensembles and disassembling sets of outfits after productions end, organising deliveries and collections, managing the storage systems and keeping the long inventory lists up to date.

The work is enjoyable for the 46-year-old, a theatre designer in her own right, whose credits including *Christie in Love* and *Gum and Goo* by Howard Brenton, *The Caretaker* by Harold Pinter and *The Lesson* by Eugène Ionesco, which won the People's Prize Award at the 100th Berlin Festival in 2006.

Jeannette, who grew up in East Berlin, has also designed for film. Among her credits are *Philipp* by Fabian Möhrke, which won the Audience Award at the 2011 Festival Premiers Plans D'Angers, and *Lunik* by Gilbert Beronneau, which won the Audience Award at the Achtung Berlin New Berlin Film Award 2007.

She explains: "To tell stories through costume is one of my greatest passions. I find the 20th century especially fascinating. I am intrigued by how the needs of progress and technology were reflected in people's outer images and, contrastingly, how the individual inner lifestyle shaped and influenced the outer form."

On her current position with Berlin State Opera, she says: "I've never worked as head of a costume depot before. However, because of my knowledge of costume history, of materials and of their treatment – and because of my experience in costume design and my eye for detail – much of the role was familiar to me."



Gabrielle hits the highway with *Hairspray*

Gabrielle Brooks* has landed a role in *Hairspray* after being a fan of the musical comedy for years.

The 2012 Acting graduate plays feisty Little Inez in the UK touring production of the hit feelgood show.

Although she portrays a 12-year-old, Gabrielle says the role is far from child's play.

"Having been a fan of *Hairspray* for years I knew a lot about the show and the character, so I mostly found stamina my biggest challenge," explains Gabrielle. "As the production requires a lot of energy, exercise and taking care of my body were the areas I first focused on."

Hairspray has scooped myriad accolades including Olivier and Tony awards. Underneath the musical romp's laughter-packed veneer, however, lies a serious issue: racism in the US in the 1960s.

The 23-year-old, from London, explains that during the rehearsal process she gained a deeper understanding of the historical context of the show, which tells of a plucky overweight girl who pursues stardom on a local TV dance programme while combating bigotry.

She tells us: "The subject of the show is segregation and we were extremely fortunate with our director, who insisted we researched *Hairspray's* background and he helped too.

Gabrielle, who went through several rounds of auditions for the coveted role this January, is enjoying life on the road.

"Every day I play on a stage with an amazingly talented group of people who share the same interests as me," she says. "I couldn't ask for much more. I feel so lucky to be seeing the country and doing what I love. It's a lovely little adventure and there is nothing like your 'tour family'."

Gabrielle has also appeared in the 10th anniversary production of the Madness musical *Our House*, at London's Savoy Theatre, and in Theatre Royal Bath's UK touring production of *Avenue Q*, among other shows.

*Gabrielle Broomes at LIPA



Gabrielle performing as Little Inez in *Hairspray*. Photograph by Tristram Kenton

Oh, mummy

It's a pharaoh way from Egypt to Derby, so Lucy Worthington is using her facilitation skills and creativity to bring some of the mystery of the pyramids to the city.

Lucy (*Community Drama*, 2012) works as a casual education facilitator at Derby Museum and Art Gallery, running children's workshops on the afterlife and the embalming process. The 22-year-old, who dresses up as an Egyptian princess for the role, uses drama to teach young people about ancient Egyptian culture and helps them model shabti funerary figures out of clay.

As part of her remit at the museum, Lucy sometimes steps into the world of natural history. She teaches, again using drama, young people about ancient hippopotamus remains found locally.

Lucy also runs outreach workshops on the ancient Egyptians and helps colleagues run educational activities focussing on the Victorians, the Romans and the Vikings.

On top of all this, Lucy works on events involving external organisations. Her most recent and large-scale assignment was to help run a themed craft session with local young people at a Derby astronomy event, held as part of the BBC *Stargazing Live* television series.

"I really love how varied the role is," Lucy enthuses. "I enjoy working with so many different age groups and communities and seeing them enjoying themselves and embracing all the knowledge you pass on when facilitating."

Originally from Stockport, Lucy says that going out into the community, as part of her studies here, has paid dividends: "Learning how to work with diverse groups and how to approach different groups, when facilitating, has really prepared me for this position."



Lucy in her Egyptian princess regalia

Prime time crime slot for Keelie

When Keelie-Jade Grindley landed her first TV acting role she struck lucky – with a part in prime time ITV cop drama *Scott & Bailey*. Keelie played a downtrodden young mum questioned by the show's detective duo during a murder inquiry.

She says: "I was very grateful to work with such established and talented actresses, Suranne Jones and Lesley Sharpe. I left feeling extremely inspired."

Keelie studied the Foundation Certificate in Acting in 2011 and, since leaving us, has also worked in theatre. The enterprising 24-year-old has added another string to her bow. She established Lace Noir Entertainment, an all-female dance company which has been busy performing around the North West. Trained dancer Keelie has recently built on the success of the troupe by opening a sister company, Noir Dance Academy, in Cheshire (www.noirdanceacademy.moonfruit.com/).



Musical numbers the McCool way

For any artist, promoting a debut album is all about getting your music heard by as many people as possible. Natalie McCool has had something of a head start; she performed before a crowd of 120,000 at Hyde Park and then played to 70,000 race-goers at the Grand National in Liverpool.

2009 Music graduate Natalie, who launched her self-titled album in April – after the two gigs – explains: “We were asked to do the Hyde Park show by the Musicians Union and it was an amazing

gig! It was very surreal to be performing to that many people. When we were sound checking in the afternoon, the park was virtually empty and then about an hour later, there were 120,000 people in front of us. No time to get nervous really!”

She performed at the famous Aintree steeplechase event, after being chosen from over 100 acts competing for the privilege.

The singer-songwriter, from Widnes, caught the attention of Grammy award-winning producer Steve Levine when she

won the Make It Break It Awards in 2007. Known for his work on albums by bands such as The Beach Boys and Culture Club, Steve signed Natalie to his Hubris Records label.

Since then, the 25-year-old has continued to win plaudits from critics impressed by her assured vocals and guitar skills. Her music has been championed by BBC Radio 2, BBC6 Music, XFM and the *Guardian*, among others. Her track *Black Sun* featured on Channel 4's *Hollyoaks*.

Fresh from her album launch and an acclaimed gig at Liverpool Sound City, we caught up with Natalie at the start of her album tour. She was particularly looking forward to a session at Abbey Road studios and playing both Liverpool Rocks and the Liverpool Music Awards in August.

Her band is made up of LIPA Music graduates Joe Danher (2010) on guitar, Sian Monaghan (2010) on drums and Chris Nicholls (2011) on bass guitar. At the album launch gig, they were joined by Evelyn Burke (2011) on cello.

When it comes to reaching an audience, the numbers definitely add up for Natalie. Check out her haunting cover version of Kavinsky's *Nightcall/A Real Hero* (from the soundtrack of the film *Drive*) which has notched up over 400,000 views on YouTube (www.nataliemccool.co.uk).

Photograph by Charlotte Patmore



Casa home for Burjesta Theatre

From Brecht to social realism, via clowning and kabuki, Burjesta Theatre is a small Liverpool company with giant aspirations.

Co-founded by Mikyla Jane Durkan (Community Drama, 2009), Burjesta was established to create gritty theatre that tackles heavyweight issues with a light touch. It has an apt home: The Casa. This is the Hope Street pub, socialist hub and performance space set up by ex-dockers following the Liverpool dockworkers dispute.

Mikyla, 46, who is from Ince and Elton in Cheshire, set up Burjesta with Julian Bond. She explains: “We want to provide local fringe theatre for a Liverpool audience, to produce new work which is politically and socially relevant in an imaginative and entertaining way, hopefully!”

“Both the actors and the audiences have totally embraced this type of theatre – that is one of the reasons why we want to be at The Casa and in Liverpool.”

The company's most recent production was *The Jesus Conspiracy*, a controversial reworking of the New Testament, described by the *Liverpool Echo* as “challenging, provocative theatre”.

Next up is a play called *Real Monsters Revealed* for the Merseyside Asbestos Victim Support Group, for a national event in July. The company is also working on *Burjesta Clowns in Merrie England*, which looks at the social realities of austerity Britain and the financial crisis in the Western world.

Aside from its repertoire of gritty and thought-provoking drama, the company also runs workshops for the community through which it is developing its own brand of Commedia dell'arte – Burjesta dell'arte.

“We have got something to say and we have chosen to say it through theatre,” concludes Mikyla (www.burjesta-theatre.co.uk).



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Kelly (far left) with Pink and her label team celebrating her album going double platinum

Kelly's career path heads in One Direction

Kelly explains: “I never would've got this if I hadn't done my work placement there. It was my foot in the door. I worked as hard as I could to make a name for myself. The permanent position involved doing everything I'd done as an intern, which gave me a head start.”

Based in London at Sony Music Entertainment – which co-owns Syco – Kelly also works with Scouting for Girls (among other UK acts) and with US divas Pink and Beyoncé, when they visit the UK to plug their music.

Kelly, originally from Bolton, was promoted to her current role in April this year. She tells us: “Every day is different. I'm sat at a desk 50 percent of the time and for the rest at video shoots, photo shoots and other events.

“It's very intense and never boring. It's all the work involved in the build-up to an event that I enjoy the most. But I love every moment of it, really, and I feel massively privileged and very lucky.”

And when adoring One Direction fans call up Sony asking for the band, calls go through to Kelly, who is currently working on the chart-toppers' forthcoming film and other new projects.

She states: “When people call Sony with questions about One Direction, they get put through to me. I get about four to five calls a day of this type, sometimes from screaming fans!”

On her time at LIPA, Kelly comments: “LIPA gave me the perfect combination of practice and knowledge.”

A family that rocks



Jon on tour with rock legends AC/DC

Some children grow up wanting to be fire-fighters or footballers. Jon Lewis knew from an early age what he wanted to do – work in the live music industry, like his father.

And he has done just that. Jon is today an award-winning monitor engineer whose extensive list of credits includes Sir Paul McCartney, AC/DC, Oasis, Live 8, Live Earth, Brit Awards and MTV Europe Music Awards.

He discovered his passion at an early age, when his father would tour the world working on the live sound for acts, such as Eric Clapton, Dire Straits and Level 42.

Jon, from Neath, Wales, explains: “I've always been involved in the sound/touring industry, as my father is a monitor engineer, too. I grew up going to gigs and with my dad on tour, so it was an almost natural progression for me. There was never pressure on me to do it. It always seemed such an amazing opportunity to travel and see the world.”

After leaving us, Jon (Sound Technology, 2000) went to work at the Millennium Dome in London on a Cirque du Soleil-style show. And he hasn't looked back. The 34-year-old has travelled the world with artists and worked on major one-off events including Live 8 at Hyde Park and the Friendship First show in Tel Aviv, Israel, with Sir Paul.

This year he is on the road with US pop star Pink on her *The Truth About Love* tour.

He tells us: “The show is so busy due to the circus-type nature of the production. It's amazing to see and be a part of it every night. On this tour, I'm just looking after her sound requirement (the band is mixed on a separate desk by another person).”

When Jon, named *TPI Magazine's* Monitor Engineer of the Year 2011, is not touring you will find him at home with his wife and three children. His youngest, Bodhi, was born this May.

“When I'm home, I'm home 24/7. I'm there to take them to school and pick them up and be there 100 percent of the time,” he says. “It's important to include them as much as I can in what I do. My job is part of family life.”



David's designs on display in *Cornelius* on stage. Photograph by Carol Rosegg

Electro-troubadour



Photograph by Nicola @RevenDesign

Singer-songwriter Dan Croll is riding the crest of a career wave powered on by his genre-defying blend of electronica and folk-infused pop.

The 22-year-old, whose music has caught the attention of BBC Radio 1, the *Guardian* and *Time Magazine* among others, is on the road gigging and due to release his debut album.

The 2011 Music graduate is enjoying a busy summer with festival dates in Europe and the US, where his performance at South by Southwest in Texas earlier this year, helped establish his name in industry circles stateside.

Dan tells us: “I'm also doing some headline tours in North America and Canada and possibly some big main support tours. Performing at South by Southwest opened up the floodgates to some great opportunities and seems to have given me a good foothold there.”

Former rugby player Dan, a Musicians Benevolent Fund (MBF) songwriting award recipient, attracted the attention of British radio DJs when he released his debut single, *From Nowhere*, in 2011. The track received airplay, which led to press interviews and offers of

gigs, as well as an invitation to perform on BBC Radio 1.

The multi-instrumentalist, who is originally from Stoke-on-Trent, but now based in Liverpool, says the last 12 months or so have been a bit of a “whirlwind”.

He adds that his final year at LIPA was a critical period in his career:

“Things like winning the MBF award and having the one-to-one session with Sir Paul McCartney, and the networking events, definitely allowed me to get my foot in the door. From then on, it was about making a strong first single that would announce my arrival. I think *From Nowhere* did just that.”

Dan's music crosses genres including folk, pop, rock, Afrobeat and jazz. The *Guardian* music journalist Paul Lester describes the singer-songwriter as “the electro boy with one foot in the world of folk, the troubadour who can handle himself quite nicely, thank you, with computers, and the indie kid who shares management with some very successful artists indeed, including Ellie Goulding, Rita Ora and Conor Maynard”.

From Broadway to West End – on and off

Last year David Woodhead designed the set and costumes for J B Priestley's *Cornelius* at London's Finborough Theatre. A cluster of four- and five-star reviews and an invitation to the company to perform stateside followed. The 26-year-old is now re-creating his design in leading off-Broadway venue 59E59 Theaters.

“We were invited to play in New York as part of a season called *Brits Off Broadway*,” David tells us. “It's a much bigger space which has called for a new design, but it's been great fun re-visiting the production and sharing it with an American audience.”

Also working on the production as composer and sound designer is Alex Baranowski (Sound Technology, 2005).

For David, the US trip means taking time out from his work as associate designer for the Michael Grandage season in the West End.

Since graduating from the Theatre and

Performance Design course with first class honours in 2009, David has built an impressive CV. He was short-listed for the prestigious Linbury Prize for Stage Design and also nominated for an Off West End Theatre Award for his design for *Bed & Sofa* at the Finborough.

David puts the “Offie” nomination down to attention to detail: “This production has the longest props list I've ever seen! It was set in a working office in the 1930s; I think a great joy of the piece was seeing the sheer quantity of all these period costumes, props and furniture on stage.”

He has also worked as an assistant to luminary of the stage design world, Christopher Oram. This role included a stint on *Evita* on Broadway.

David, from High Wycombe, tells us he will return to the UK to another project with a transatlantic theme: “I am designing a chamber piece version of *Titanic* at Southwark Playhouse. Now that is going to be quite a challenge!”



Dancer's theatre of dreams

As a LIPA student, Hannes-Michael Bronczkowski dreamed of seeing the world doing what he loves: dancing. His dreams have come true, just a little quicker than expected.

"I always knew I wanted to join a company and go on tour," explains Hannes-Michael, who joined Cinevox Junior Company in Switzerland a few months after graduating from the Dance programme in 2011. "I never thought it would happen so quickly. It's really amazing and I'm chuffed."

The 23-year-old worked with Cinevox for a season, touring Switzerland, France and Germany. In September 2012, he joined Germany's Giessen State Theatre dance company, with whom he is today developing his craft and getting the chance to see a little more of the globe.

This summer he is travelling to China to perform the Scottish Play in Beijing. He tells us: "Our director's very engaged and has arranged for us to take our production of *Macbeth* on a two-week tour to China as part of a cultural exchange. It's a huge operation. We're shipping the set out a month in advance and we're going with the Giessen symphony orchestra."

In the autumn, the company will be heading to Portugal as part of a choreographic exchange, resetting/recreating a piece called *Soap* by the Portuguese choreographer Rui Horta, which will become part of the German company's repertoire.

In addition to performing in dance productions, Hannes-Michael is contracted to work on operettas and musicals at Giessen State Theatre.

That means long hours and working on up to four shows at once. But it is a labour of love for Hannes-Michael, who was born in the US to an American mother and a German father.

The training regimen is classical but the repertoire is contemporary. The theatre, which is home to two performance spaces, also brings in guest choreographers. Among them is Mirko Hecktor, former principal dancer with La La La Human Steps, who developed a piece called *Siddhartha* with Giessen's ballet director, Tarek Assam.

Hannes-Michael enthuses: "It's hard work but great and rewarding at the same time. I'm really, really happy. I love that you keep developing."

Hannes-Michael (right) in *Siddhartha*. Photograph by Rolf K. Wegst

Keep an eye on I, Volatile

Being given the opportunity to open for Skunk Anansie is not to be sniffed at.

Indeed, Sunniva Lind and her band, I, Volatile, seized the chance to share a billing with the re-formed 90s rock act after winning a competition run by Norway's biggest radio station, P3.

Sunniva (Popular Music and Sound Technology, 2010) says of the gig at the 1,700-capacity Sentrum Scene in Oslo: "It was hard work, because we had to take care not to outshine them too much – after all, we were just the warm-up act."

"No, seriously, it was a huge learning experience. We went from playing to 70 people to 1,700, and being followed by one of the best live acts I'd ever seen. Those guys are professional down to their fingertips."

Sunniva formed I, Volatile in 2011 with guitarist James Whitehouse (Music, 2011). She explains that the Skunk Anansie gig generated lots of interest but that they are working harder than ever on their craft: "Playing a gig like that doesn't buy you overnight success. In the end,



From left to right Kevin Alvaro (bassist, I, Volatile), Cass (bassist, Skunk Anansie), Sunniva Lind, Skin (vocalist, Skunk Anansie), James Whitehouse, Ace (guitarist, Skunk Anansie) and Mark Richardson (drummer, Skunk Anansie)

it comes down to the music you create, so hopefully our next EP will attract some attention as well."

The EP in question was recorded this spring. Mixed and mastered by Tony Draper (Sound Technology, 2010) and Robin Schmidt (Sound Technology, 2002), it is due out in September.

In addition to the December 2012 Skunk Anansie gig and studio work, the band has been performing across Norway, with dates

including Oslo's annual Musikkfest festival.

Sunniva describes her music as hard-edged and melodic and inspired by acts as diverse as Maynard James Keenan, Tori Amos, System of a Down and Florence + The Machine.

Sunniva intends to produce new material: "I plan to escape to the mountains, and not leave there until I have written an album. It will be epic. You should stay tuned."



Atmospheric lighting during *Midnight Tango*. Photograph by Manuel Harlen

If award-winning lighting designer Rachel Bottomley turns her hand to choreography one day, there would be good reason.

For Rachel is a production electrician on the UK tour of *Midnight Tango*, a celebration of the passionate Argentinean ballroom dance starring Vincent Simone and Flavia Cacace from the hit BBC show *Strictly Come Dancing*.

The 23-year-old is criss-crossing the country with the production, helping to give audiences a night to remember – and has likely learned a move or two.

Rachel, originally from Leeds, tells us: "My role entails rigging the lighting for the show in each venue on the tour, supervising the local crew, looking after the follow spots and making sure the operators know their cues. Then every Saturday take it all down again."

"My favourite thing about working on *Midnight Tango* is touring the country doing what I love, seeing new places and meeting lots of new people along the way. In terms of the show itself, I most enjoy operating the desk – it's the most relaxing part!"

Midnight Tango was designed by fellow graduate Morgan Large (Theatre and Performance Design, 2003).

Prior to hitting the road with *Midnight Tango*, Rachel (Theatre and Performance Technology, 2012) was shadowing lighting designer Jo Town on *The Life of Stuff* at London's critically acclaimed Theatre 503, an intimate venue once hailed by *Guardian* writer Lyn Gardner as the most important theatre in Britain.

This was part of Rachel's prize for winning the 2012 Michael Northern Bursary, awarded by the Association of Lighting Designers (ALD), a trade body for live performance industry lighting designers working in the UK and overseas.

Rachel comments: "Winning the bursary was a great feeling and something I'm really proud of. I'd recommend any aspiring lighting designer to put forward a portfolio of work for it, as it's a platform to help launch your career from."

On her time with us, Rachel says: "The most valuable thing I took away from LIPA was the number of opportunities to put theory into practice and apply it in real-world situations."

Labour of love



turn, led to a full-time role with West End producer and general manager Julian Stoneman (pictured right), with whom she currently works.

Sarah is using her growing skill-set to help bring Julian Stoneman musicals to the stage. Shows she has worked on include *Jersey Boys*, *Let It Be* and *Rock of Ages*.

"I'm learning how to cast and project-manage in the West End,"

"It was the best £20 I had received in my whole life."

So says Sarah Brown (pictured left) of the fruit of her first profitable theatre production, a new musical she staged at Liverpool's Kazimier club in 2011 in her third year of studies.

This small but symbolic financial victory proved a career catalyst for the 23-year-old. It helped her win a coveted place on the Stage One Apprenticeship Scheme for New Producers after she graduated. This, in

enthusies production assistant Sarah, whose role involves negotiating contracts, liaising with creative and production teams and overseeing whole projects from start to finish. "It's the best job in the world for me. I know I want to spend my career working as a producer and general manager in commercial theatre."

Sarah, who was born in Portsmouth and spent many years in the US with her naval officer parents, is also blazing a trail as a producer in her own right. This spring, with financial help from LIPA's graduate fund – and support from Julian Stoneman and LIPA's enterprise champion project officer, Lynne Harrison – Sarah staged her first London production.

Called *The Boy Who Kicked Pigs*, the production was an adaption of actor Tom Baker's darkly comic children's book of the same name. Acting company Kill the Beast adapted and performed the play at London's Jacksons Lane arts venue.

"It was a great success and, on the back of it, the show has been offered a venue up at Edinburgh," says Sarah. "It was a huge challenge but I learned so much from doing it myself. I've grown as a producer and it gave me a real boost of confidence."

Sarah, who also works for Julian Stoneman on the annual Olivier Awards, tells us she loves all types of theatre, but musicals in particular and is keen on building her career in London and helping champion new writing.

Ed start for Brit Award winner

It's not every day you get a personal thank you in an acceptance speech from a Brit Award winner. So the 2013 ceremony was a very special occasion for Ed Millett, when he and business partner, Ben Mawson, were name-checked by Lana Del Ray, the recipient of the International Female Solo Artist Award.

"It was a really amazing night, a validation of the last three years' work," says Ed.

Experienced artist manager Ed, 34, began representing Lana, after being introduced by music lawyer Ben, who had already been working with her for a year. "She had asked him to manage her, as well as act as her lawyer and he did not feel he had the experience... I was looking for a new situation with my current roster and so we decided to team up. We had a common idea of what we wanted a management company to be and wanted to start something together."

The duo brought Lana to London, where she wrote 70 to 80 songs including *Video Games*. With a lack of interest from record labels, they released the song as a single, along with a video created by the American singer. Within a week of posting it online, the song went viral becoming a mammoth hit. It also went on to win an Ivor Novello Award.

"The key point was that we started with her on our own, labels are risk averse and they did not see room for what she was doing," comments Ed.

The company created by Ed and Ben, TaP Management, has recently opened an office in LA in addition to the main base in London. Ed, has moved with his wife and four-year-old son, Finn, to head up the US operation.

The 2011 Management graduate explains: "LA and London are the two global centres for songwriters/producers now and so it made sense to set up there. Also with Ben and I working so closely, there was a lot of overlap in skills and contacts and so my moving here means all our clients are actively represented 24 hours a day."

TaP Management has developed into a multi-faceted company representing songwriters and producers as well as artists. It has its own publishing company, a digital PR agency, and is launching a brand consultancy division and building a recording studio with writing rooms. The team continue to build on the success they created with two-time Brit Award winner Lana and earlier this year they signed platinum-selling Australian duo Angus and Julia Stone.

Flock 'n' roll



The band pictured left to right: Lucy Mercer, Emily Lansley and Rebecca Hawley

Stealing Sheep are performing their heady blend of psychedelic folk-pop in pastures new this summer as they continue on their upward trajectory. Co-founded by Rebecca Hawley (Music, 2008), the band are playing more than 25 festivals at home and overseas, among them Glastonbury. "There's one in Iceland we're particularly excited about – Iceland Airwaves – not to mention England's festival giant Glasto," enthuses vocalist and keyboard player Rebecca, who performs alongside Emily Lansley and Lucy Mercer. Currently working on their second album with producer Joe Wills (Sound Technology, 2011), the band also have a headline European tour in September. Stealing Sheep's unique sounds – distilled in their critically acclaimed 2012 debut album *Into the Diamond Sun* – have won them new fans. And UK dates with The Postal Service and Mercury Prize winners, Alt-J, helped them gain more exposure.

On performing last winter with art rockers Alt-J, Rebecca comments: "When we were touring with them, they won the Mercury Prize, so there was a very exciting buzz of energy around the tour. They had a lot of fans who were also interested in us and we felt we musically complimented the band, as well as really enjoying their company!" Stealing Sheep have also twice been nominated for a GIT (Getintothis) Award, a new celebration of Merseyside musical talent, dubbed the "Scouse Mercury Prize". Rebecca comments that Liverpool, now her home after moving from Staffordshire to study at LIPA, is Stealing Sheep's musical petri dish, referring to the city's vibrant arts scene and rich musical heritage. She tells us: "We're very affected by Liverpool, creatively, as every artist is by their habitat! There's a particular vibe to Liverpool and an array of inspirational people here that have influenced the way we write. We've definitely drawn inspiration and style from our surroundings."

Django joy for Dror

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Django Unchained, a Western about a freed slave who seeks revenge on a brutal plantation owner, scooped a pair of Oscars (for best original screenplay and best supporting actor) at the 2013 Academy Awards.

Dror, who is originally from Israel but now lives in Los Angeles, was delighted. He tells us: "I was very happy and proud for everyone involved. It was a prize to be able to work on such a great movie with very dedicated and passionate people at the top of their game. Quentin Tarantino is an amazing leader, director, writer and thinker."

Django was one of Dror's latest commissions. Others include *The Wolverine* (which premieres this summer), current project *Lone Survivor* (due out in 2014), *Inglourious Basterds* and *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter*.

It was in the area of music, however, where Dror first developed his craft. After moving to New York following graduation he worked with emerging acts and with established names such as Guns N' Roses, Björk, Patti Smith, The Black Crowes and Gwen Stefani.

While in the Big Apple, Dror started employing his sound technology skills in the specialist areas of film and video game production.

"The basic technical skills are the same. It was a natural progression and, over time, I found the opportunities to make the transition," explains Dror, who now works predominantly for the film and video games industries after relocating to Los Angeles. "I'm able to bring something special to the mix: my experience in music and my engineering background."

On his time with us, he says: "Jon Thornton [head of sound technology at LIPA] shaped me both creatively and professionally. Every day I use the things he taught me."

Royally entertained

"I love the fact my job is to make people smile." Those are the words of Amy Suddens, a dancer at one of the biggest music halls in France, the Royal Palace.

Amy is part of a cast of over 40 artists who provide sizzling cabaret-style entertainment at the 1,000-capacity venue, which nestles in the Alsatian countryside, near the French-German border.

The 26-year-old gives us a taste of life there: "We're all standing on a huge staircase, the boys in suits and the girls in sparkling coats and huge feathered headdresses. And without fail, with each curtain-up, there is an audible gasp from the audience."

"At that moment, you know that you've the whole show ahead of you: two hours of doing what you love and seeing the enjoyment on 1,000 faces."

Amy (Dance, 2009) joined the Royal Palace as a showgirl last year after working at City of Dreams resort in Macau and on cruise ships for leading entertainment company Jean Ann Ryan Productions, among other projects.

Originally from Zimbabwe, Amy tells us that she is enjoying every minute of life as an entertainer: "I love being part of a cast. Going through the gruelling process of rehearsals together, and then living together and sharing the stage and the dressing room antics, means that dancers build bonds that are unlike those built in other workplaces."

"My cast are my family away from home and I love being part of a unit like this. I'm very aware of how blessed I am and never want to take it for granted."



Amy in one of her glamorous costumes

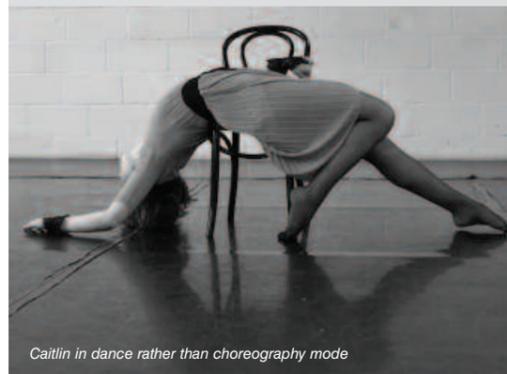
Caitlin dances with the Devil

It is said that the Devil has all the best tunes. True or not, Caitlin Barnett found satanic inspiration for the performance she choreographed at The Place in London, one of the UK's premier centres for dance. The piece, for Wrecking Ball Dance Company, was called *Even the Devil Has Demons* and fused contemporary, house and jazz dance.

Caitlin, who is originally from Kingston upon Thames, explains: "I was inspired by the way demons and the Devil are depicted in film and music. *Sympathy for the Devil* by The Rolling Stones was the piece of music that originally got me going, along with the image of the hoodie in Philip Ridley's film *Heartless*, which looked at creating modern-day demon iconography."

The performance, in February, was part of Resolutions! 2013, The Place's open season for emerging choreographers. Wrecking Ball staged a repeat performance at the Bonnie Bird Theatre at Laban as part of The Experiment – a forum held by The Female Choreographers' Collective, aimed at stripping away audience perceptions of gender in choreography.

Caitlin graduated from the dance degree in 2010 after completing the Diploma in Dance in 2007. She has performed on TV as an end dancer on the ITV game show *Magic Numbers* and for productions including Future Cinema's *Grease* and Secret Cinema's *The Red Shoes*. She is also a member of Rhiannon Faith: dancingtheatre, a contemporary company which creates collaborative live performance art.



Caitlin in dance rather than choreography mode

The 25-year-old decided to turn her hand to choreography after an audition in which she was asked to perform a routine that she found uninspiring: "To be honest, I thought I could do a better job... I knew I'd eventually want to go into choreography, so decided to crack on with it, sooner rather than later, in order to get to grips with that side of the industry."

She still enjoys performing. She recently danced in a flash mob with Living the Dream, the company set up by her former classmate Zoë Jackson, for a programme to be aired on ITV this summer. She will be working again with Rhiannon Faith: dancingtheatre, later on in the year.

Her long-term ambitions still lie with developing her career as a choreographer and creating some devilishly good routines.

Ben in tights

continued from page 1

The show is largely scripted and part improvised. Ben explains: "There is a lot of interaction with the audience and we sometimes get cheeky audience members who like to heckle, so we're always ready with a comeback or two. If it weren't for Max Rubin's improv classes at LIPA, I would be eaten alive in this show. So thank you, Max and LIPA!"

In keeping with the fast and furious nature of the production, the tour plays in a different city each night – in venues that seat audiences from 50 to 1,000. Ben adds: "It's a special company with amazing followers and fans. My favourite

part is at the end, when we run into the foyer to meet the audience and we get to say thank you to them for coming, take pictures and sign a few autographs. Universally, the audiences have been incredible and have been complaining of stomach pains because they have laughed so much!"

The future looks bright for the Shakespearean funny-man. He tells us: "I have been asked to do the autumn tour of this production and then another Reduced Shakespeare Company show, *The Bible: The Complete Word of God (abridged)* which will tour in early 2014. There are also rumours of the company taking up a longer residence in the West End, which is very exciting."

*Benjamin Watts at LIPA

Sound sales success for Sarah



Sarah and her son Leon at the decks

When we caught up with Sarah Yule, she had just touched down from a three-week trip wining and dining in Helsinki, Stockholm, Paris, Dubai and Zurich.

It was business – not pleasure – though for Sarah, who is international sales manager for inMusic, a role that involves meeting clients across Europe, the Middle East, Africa and India to sell products for brands such as Akai, Numark, M-Audio and Alesis.

The jet-setting lifestyle is not what Sarah anticipated when she graduated from the Sound Technology programme in 2003. She explains: "I had never originally considered a career in this field, my dream was always to be a studio engineer... maybe ending up in New York or Jamaica recording soul or reggae bands!"

"However in the summer holidays after finishing my second year, I gave birth to my beautiful son, Leon. I graduated three days before Leon's first birthday and I realised then that studio hours were not very mum-friendly. I had decided that freelance engineering or mixing would be my best option so fell into a role with Dolphin Music in order to pay for the equipment I would need, while working a more 9-5 job."

Sarah was the first product specialist for the online music retailer, which was then a start-up company. She quickly became an integral part of the organisation, named one of the *Guardian's* fastest growing businesses.

In 2005 she left to join TL Audio, a specialist UK manufacturer of valve audio recording equipment. In just three years she had worked her way up to the role of Sales Director. She joined inMusic in 2010, where she is now busy working on the growth and development of some key musical equipment and DJ brands.

The 31-year-old talks about the challenges her job entails: "The biggest challenges I face day-to-day are ensuring I retain an intricate understanding of the different countries and cultures I deal with, plus the trends, opportunities, and challenges that surround me. I need to keep up with global exchange rates too, as fluctuations can alter international business stability."

Sarah faces the challenge with a real passion for the industry, a driving enthusiasm to keep in touch with market trends and new technologies and to improve the services her company delivers to customers. She says: "I very much enjoy my current role at such an exciting and innovative company as inMusic."

"One of the proudest moments in my career was receiving industry awards for a product that I conceptually designed from the first sketch to the finished product called the Fat Track Tube Production Suite. I would like to design more products at some point in the future."

Auf Wiedersehen

We held a reunion for graduates at café-bar Gilka in Berlin on Friday 15th March 2013. A big thank you to everyone who attended! We had graduates coming from as far away as Finland and Lake Constance, many of them from our early years. Around 50 graduates mingled with staff Mark Featherstone-Witty, Maria Barrett, Steve Buckwald and Jan Buchanan. It was lovely to see the strong links between our international graduates still in evidence. When we left the party was still in full swing. Maria Barrett demonstrated her stamina by being the last staff member to leave, with our guests still celebrating well into the early hours of the morning. Prost!



Double acts and productions

Our congratulations go out to the following alumni on their recent happy events. If you told us about a forthcoming wedding or baby, please send us a reminder after the big day so that we can include you in our next newsletter.

Elizabeth Brittles (Community Drama, 2009) gave birth to son Jacob (Jacob Willis, named after his Dad) at the end of last year.

Brianna Kendrick (was Christianson, Music, 2005) and her husband John welcomed their son Tiernan Alexander Kaha'aheonalani Kendrick on 26 February 2013. His Hawaiian name means "the pride of those who now in heaven dwell."



Natalie Flynn (MA in Performing Arts: Education, 2009) married Steve Ainsworth at Peckforton Castle in Cheshire on 30th August 2012

2007 graduates Stacey Pike (Dance) and Samuel Maurice (Acting) were married on 9th August 2012.

Victoria Haynes (Dance) and Adam Weber (Acting) got engaged this spring. The two graduated in 2011 and started dating in their second year at LIPA.

Laurel Martel (Acting, 2009) recently got engaged to Ric Lean (Performing Arts Music, 2007)



Go-to guy behind the scenes at Norway's major events

When any high-profile event takes place in Norway, there is a good chance that leading provider of entertainment solutions, AVAB CAC, is involved. Didrik Paulsen is a key member of the team, making it all happen behind the scenes. This means he has worked on some of the most exciting occasions in the Norway arts calendar, from the Nobel Peace Prize Concert to the Norwegian 'Grammys'.

The 2008 Theatre and Performance Technology graduate is a project manager at AVAB CAC. While he has yet to cut his teeth on managing one of the major events, he has worked as a lighting technician for several years on the Nobel concert, been on tour with Norwegian Eurovision twice and, most recently, worked on the latest edition of *Norway's Got Talent*.

Didrik describes his project manager role:

"I come up with a solution which suits the client's needs. It's my responsibility to make sure we get the equipment we need for the job, along with the crew. I'll sort out the logistics, book freelancers, make lighting drawings and make sure everything is ready before get-in. Out on the job, I'm responsible for rigging lights, dealing with the customer and making the lighting designer happy."

The 28-year-old, from Halden in Norway, says the people he works with are the best part of the job.

He tells us: "The most challenging aspect is the get-out from an arena with outdoor loading of the trucks at three in the morning between December and March. In Norway, it gets cold and it actually snows here! In terms of a specific project, it must be one for a Norwegian band in Nevlunghavn. We delivered a medium-size LX rig on an alphasstage in the harbour of this little coastal town – pretty straightforward. However, on that very day, they measured a rainfall record, meaning we had problems with lights from beginning to end and, of course, we all got soaked to the bone.

"After a 15-hour day, it turned out the organiser hadn't booked enough hotel rooms, so I had to share mine with a rigger. Not a nice end to the day."



Ben's LA connection

Hollywood is the throbbing engine room of the US film industry – and where Ben Schneider has launched his career as a screen actor.

The 25-year-old is notching up a string of credits, among them a Cannes documentary about the business and craft of producing films. Screened at the festival this May, *Seduced and Abandoned* was co-produced by Alec Baldwin and features interviews with Francis Ford Coppola and Martin Scorsese, among others. Ben (Acting, 2009) appears as himself and talks about life as an emerging actor in today's industry.

This August and September Ben will be in New York shooting *Duet*, a drama about a washed-up rock star who becomes the mentor and



Ben in a *Dig Two Graves* promotional shot

singing coach of a troubled young woman. Ben plays the male lead.

Another project on the boil is *Over the Wall*, a drama about two sets of close friends whose intertwined lives are ripped apart by a tragedy. Ben is also working on *The Murky Waters*, a drama about a cynical old man and the life-changing effect the arrival of his young grandson has on him.

This July *Dig Two Graves*, another of his film projects, is going to wrap on filming in his home state of Illinois. Ben is

playing the older brother of the main protagonist.

"I've always tried to put myself out there as much as I can," explains Screen Actors Guild member Ben, who is originally from Chicago and cites networking as a key self-promotional tool. "Living in the heart of the film industry really does have its advantages. Everything you need is right around the corner. It's nice when you can make a local call to someone and then have a face-to-face chat with them soon after."

Update from our founder

Well, one May letter could not have come fast enough. I am thrilled that we've now heard that we can start the LIPA Free Primary School in September 2014.

Because it takes ten years of constant and deliberate practice to stand a chance of being good at anything demanding, I've got into the habit of informing new students that their interlude here is just one element of a longer journey and, ideally (as I wrote last time), the sooner you start the better. Although the primary school will be a regular school (so a non-selected intake), we are going to do this right: give the pupils the best possible primary school experience they can get. We'll be following their progress after leaving, although, who knows, if we are allowed to build (and that's what will need to be done, hopefully on our site), they'll be moving along to a secondary school... provided by us.

Inevitably this has encouraged more focussed wondering about how we become the people we are: what is the interplay between nature and nurture? And it turns out that many are interested in just this topic – a relatively new field of epigenetics has opened up. I can't begin to do justice about this in a paragraph, but *The Genius in All of Us* (David Shenk), if you are interested, is worth a look.

In September, work starts on the 70 Hope Street Building, although, as usual, we are having to tailor our dreams to the amount of cash we have.

As I write this (towards the end of May and Paul has recently been here for his usual session with some third year singer-songwriters), third years are busy with final projects, final performances and showcases and, as you did, realising that three years passed in a flash and, despite all our preparation for this, it's still a bit scary to step outside familiar warmth and support.

Outside our gates, we are, inevitably, grappling with our coalition government. Their plans (delayed) for higher education, immigration (students still being treated as migrants... but lobbying continues) and performing arts (both in schools and nationally). I appeared on BBC Breakfast TV to oppose the government's plan to remove the creative arts from 'core' subjects in the school curriculum. This campaign succeeded, although they are having another go, this time using another device. Why do some governments see the performing arts as a desirable, rather than an essential part of humanity? (Answers in an e-mail please). All the usual best,

May

Graduation 2013

At our graduation in July we are awarding our Companionships to six people who have shared their skills and expertise with us and we are awarding our fourth Honoured Friend.

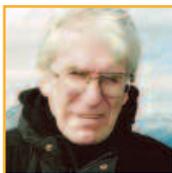
Companions

Andy Hayles



He co-founded Charcoalblue in 2004. Building on his previous six years' experience as a theatre practitioner, his company's consultancy projects are a roll-call of emblematic theatres: the Royal Shakespeare Company; National Theatre; Bristol Old Vic; Camden Roundhouse, Royal Court Theatre, London; Young Vic London and the Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse. Their transformation of the RSC continued to win awards after its opening in 2011. The corporate brochure has two pages headed, 'some of the things we've been working on', 'some of the things' number 111. Charcoalblue has also worked internationally in the USA, the Middle East and Europe.

Keith Johnstone



Keith's contribution to learning has been his pioneering improvisational work; his book, *Impro*, has been in continuous print since 1979. This was written after a ten year stint in the 1960s at the Royal Court Theatre, London where he started as a play reader, became the director of its studio theatre, directed in the main house and, finally, became an Associate Director. In 1971, he moved to Canada, where he taught, formed a theatre company, and gave workshops elsewhere in a variety of countries. He invented many improvisation forms, including Theatresports and The Life Game.

Stephen Mear



Stephen's choreographic biography spans musical theatre and opera throughout the UK and internationally. From shows like *Kiss Me*, *Kate*, *Betty Blue Eyes*, *Mary Poppins* and *Singin' in the Rain* to *Don Giovanni*. His musical work has resulted in six Olivier nominations and three Olivier Awards, a Tony, a Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award and a Helpmann Award. He has worked in London and in eight regional theatres, including the Chichester Festival Theatre where he is an associate choreographer. Internationally, aside from Broadway, he has worked in Holland, Japan and Greece – to name just three. He has worked for television, including a Victoria Wood Christmas special.

Mark Ronson



Mark is a renaissance music man: a DJ, a Grammy Award-winning producer, a solo artist and a bandleader. Possibly best known for his work on Amy Winehouse's *Back to Black*, he has also carried out production duties on Adele's *19* and Kaiser Chiefs' *Off with Their Heads*, to name two. After his debut solo album, his second solo offering *Version*, went double platinum. 2008 was the year that he was given a BRIT Award for the Best British Male

Solo Artist. Last year he composed a piece for the Royal Ballet, as well as creating an anthem for Coca Cola's campaign, fusing the sounds of Olympic sports with music, featuring Katy B.

Zenon Schoepe



Zenon is an ardent advocate for audio quality. He's the editorial director at *Resolution*, the international magazine for audio professionals who work in broadcast, postproduction, recording and multimedia. His publishing career has spanned over 30 years and, during that time, he has written widely, aside from editing the best known publication *Studio Sound*. *Resolution* is his own creation, launched in 2002. He wanted to achieve a balanced

understanding of technology, the sound engineer's craft and business. He is a stalwart supporter of audio education.

Seymour Stein



Seymour is a record industry great. He received a lifetime achievement award from the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2005, received the same award in 2010 at the International Dance Awards and received Billboard's first icon award in 2012. These awards recognised his work as co-founder and chair of Sire Records. His list of signings, often predicting public taste, include, among many others: Talking Heads, Depeche Mode, The Smiths, The Cure,

Madness, Erasure, Aztec Camera and Echo and the Bunnymen. Sire put punk and new wave on the map in the 1970s and 1980s. In 1982, he signed Madonna. He brought many international artists to the US, as well as building relationships with a host of independent labels. Sire remains an active member of Warner Bros music with a notable current roster and recent signings including Delta Rae, Kill It Kid and Ewert and the Two Dragons.

Rowena Morgan



Honoured Friend

Rowena is being recognised for the unstinting help she has given our music discipline, particularly our master class programme. She has worked at the British Academy of Songwriters, Composers and Authors (BASCA) for four years which is where she is now. She has founded the Ultimate Music Industry Networking nights in the guise of The Musical Geisha. She studied engineering and has worked for over 25 years in sales and marketing, nationally and internationally.

When Ben met the Queen

Earlier this year, Ben Brown went to Buckingham Palace to collect a special accolade from the Queen.

Ben (Music, 2012) received a Queen's Diamond Jubilee Volunteering Award from the monarch, in recognition of his work with the Balloons Project, an arts-based educational scheme he launched in 2009.



The 27-year-old dedicated the award – created to mark the Queen's 60 years on the throne – to the LIPA students and graduates who donated their time to help him get Balloons off the ground.

"Receiving it is a huge, huge honour, the icing on the cake of the last three years," enthused Ben.

"This award is for the volunteers who made everything possible – thank you."

Singer-songwriter Ben, from Southport, started Balloons as part of a class assignment.

The project uses the arts and the Olympic and Paralympic values to help inspire and motivate young people from Merseyside to reach their full potential.

During the palace reception in May, Ben spoke to the royal couple about the project.

He tells us: "The Queen and Prince Phillip asked me about Balloons and we had a chat about the work that we do," says Ben. "It was an incredible day but I don't think the enormity of the occasion quite hit me until I was on the train on my way back home."

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

SENNHEISER

LIPA

