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## THE LIVERPOOL INSTITUTE FOR PERFORMING ARTS



Photograph by Johan Persson

### Direct action

Olivier Award-winning director Jamie Lloyd has added the National Theatre to his CV credits just six years after getting his first big break.

This year, the 31-year-old opened the classic comedy *She Stoops to Conquer* at the prestigious London venue's largest theatre, the Olivier. Garnering a wealth of critical acclaim, the play featured fellow LIPA graduates Gavin Spokes (Acting 2000), Stavros Demetraki (Acting 2006) and Jonathan Glew (Acting 2001).

The *Daily Telegraph* hailed Jamie's production a "fresh, spirited and often blissfully funny staging" while the *Guardian* enthused that "Jamie Lloyd's production is a collective success which leaves the theatre echoing with the sound of the audience's happiness".

The National joins a growing list of theatres where the Poole native has worked his directorial magic since being handed the helm of his first production, Harold Pinter's *The Caretaker* at Sheffield Crucible.

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## Jonas awarded Norwegian 'Grammy'



**Singer-songwriter Jonas Alaska\* was named best newcomer at the Spellemannprisen, Norway's answer to the Grammy Awards, in January 2012.**

**The 24-year-old, who received a grant of £28,000 for winning, was also short-listed for an award for best lyricist and for best male artist.**

**The Spellemannprisen have taken place annually since 1972 and recognise the cream of Norway's musical crop.**

Originally from Aust-Agder, Jonas released his first album in 2011, a self-titled offering of country, pop and Americana. He is currently working on his second album.

Jonas can be seen on the Norwegian festival circuit this summer. He graduated in 2011 after studying Music here.

\*Jonas Aslaksen when at LIPA.

Photograph by Kaja Bruskeland

## Management maestro

Multi-talented Adam Burgan has received a prestigious accolade for his work in theatre management.

The 30-year-old, who took the helm of a regional venue in 2009, was named theatre manager of the year at the National Encore Theatre Awards in May 2012.

The award was given in recognition of his role at The Octagon in Somerset, where he not only looks after the day-to-day running of the venue, but also wears the hats of artistic director, district arts development manager and, occasionally, outreach teacher.

Adam, who oversees some 250 performances a year, was presented with a statuette at a presentation evening in Fairfield Halls in Croydon, held by organisers trade magazine *Encore* and attended by a mix of theatre managers, producers, artists, agents, promoters, suppliers and celebrities.

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Adam receives his theatre manager of the year award from British actor John Altman

# Brew's Olympic call-up



James, or "Brew" as he is known, working at the Olympic Stadium

After cutting his industry teeth as a technician at a 400-seat regional theatre, James Breward, aka "Brew", is today tackling one of the biggest and most exciting challenges of his career.

The 32-year-old is deputy production manager for communications for London 2012 Ceremonies, ensuring some 9,000 cast and crew are able to communicate before, during and after the opening and closing events. Brew (Sound Technology 2002) joined London 2012 Ceremonies in October 2011 to get involved as an interface between the contractors and the ceremony organisers.

Brew said: "In short, the job involves drawing some huge schematics of where all the hardware needs to be and how it is all interconnected, plus creating the largest Excel spreadsheet I've ever had to use to date! All this helps tell me who needs which hardware with what accessories.

"I attempt to interpret the demands of the production, be it the number of hand-held portable radios we need or how someone's matrix panel, or 'comms console', is programmed. I then convey this to the contractor."

Brew, who is working at the Olympic Stadium with other LIPA alumni as well as current students on placement, first applied his skills in the field of communications systems as a graduate at Ipswich's 400-seat New Wolsey Theatre. While later working on productions of *Miss Saigon*, *Mary Poppins*, *We Will Rock You* and *The War of the Worlds* and with artists like Katherine Jenkins and Christophe Willem, his knowledge and skills as a sound operator, system tech and production sound engineer developed.

He explained: "In the musical theatre environment, it's the sound department who typically looks after comms and I've had the opportunity to work for a number of people, who furthered my knowledge and understanding of how to do comms well!"

His skills in this area helped him secure a contract at the All England Lawn Tennis Club, looking after the system that interconnects officials, the Hawk-Eye adjudication devices, the public display screens and the broadcast facility for the Wimbledon Championships.

"It's from there I was asked to step up to the challenge of the Olympic ceremonies," explained Brew. "It's quite a jump, but fundamentally the principal is the same: it's still 'just a bit of wire and a magnet', as Herbie Flowers says."

Originally from Birmingham, Brew enjoys his work and after the Games, he'll be spending quality time with his family: "It's fantastic being so busy and involved with so many different and exciting projects, but the trade-off is not being home for tea with the family every night."

# Learning the ropes at BBC

Lauren Murphy has set sail on a career with BBC Learning, working on new educational projects for both online and broadcast audiences.

The 23-year-old is part of BBC Learning's project production team and provides a range of logistical and on-the-ground support, from scheduling meetings and drawing up itineraries to writing call sheets and working on live events.

Lauren (Management 2010) said: "It's a great department to work for. We produce content ranging from online resources for teachers and partners to large-scale tours, all in conjunction with major BBC brands."

This summer she was working on *Blue Peter's Big Olympic Tour*, a spin-off from the popular children's television programme, broadcast every Saturday morning over nine weeks from towns and villages along the Olympic torch route.

"These events gave those attending the chance to take part in a host of interactive learning activities surrounding sports science, the history of the Games and sports broadcasting, as well as a chance to try out a range of sports and watch a stage show," Lauren explained.

"My role was pretty diverse but mainly centred on arranging logistics such as travel, accommodation and catering, and on producing the event bible for each event," said Lauren, who works out of MediaCityUK in Manchester. "As we had a team of 50 working for BBC Learning at each site it was quite a task!"

As part of her studies, Lauren worked on events in Liverpool including the MTV Europe Music Awards at Echo Arena and a fashion show at St. George's Hall which was organised by her and fellow LIPA students and raised £2,500 for local charity Claire House Children's Hospice.

Lauren, originally from Wirral, said: "My LIPA training has been critical in helping with my career. With the management course having such a strong focus on practical work, this meant I graduated with a wide variety of experience on my CV."



Lauren during Blue Peter's Big Olympic Tour

# Dancer boards the Starlight Express



Jason as Hip-Hopper 2/Freight Wagon in the Bochum, Germany production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Starlight Express*. Photograph by Jens Hauer

Jason Andrew Guest is rockin' and rollin' – quite literally.

He has been cast in the world's most successful production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Starlight Express*, the fast-paced futuristic musical performed on roller skates.

Jason (Dance 2011) is based in Bochum, Germany, where the show is performed in a 1,700-seat theatre that was built especially for the glittering rock-infused spectacular.

Telling a tale of a race between anthropomorphous train characters – including the classic underdog who triumphs over adversity – the Bochum production of *Starlight Express* has attracted over 14 million theatre-goers since 1988 and earned itself a Guinness World Record.

Originally from Walsall, Jason plays a hip-hopping freight wagon,

one of 26 performers who zip around the theatre's 250-metre circuit at speeds of up to 60 km/h in a blaze of special effects.

Jason, who attended the show's own skating school, enthused: "*Starlight Express* is such an amazing show to work on. It's hard, but don't get me wrong, every day I'm so grateful to have this fabulous job. I love every minute of it and I don't want it to end!"

Prior to joining *Starlight Express*, Jason was in the touring production of *Hair*.

On life at LIPA, he said: "With such a high standard of training and the professionalism of both students and lecturers, I developed a wide range of dance skills along with a well-rounded understanding of today's performing arts industry and my place in it."

# Motoring with M6 Theatre



From compiling funding reports to planning a youth theatre festival and working with young people, Caroline Kennedy is getting used to juggling a multitude of tasks.

Caroline (Community Drama 2010) is Act Now! programme manager at M6 Theatre in Rochdale, a diverse role that involves running a participatory project that works with young people from across the borough.

When not busy with paperwork, the 28-year-old can often be found on stage working with budding eight to 18-year-old performers, developing outreach activities, or planning community events with partner organisations.

Caroline, who is originally from Paisley, said: "I think the variety of my position is what I enjoy the most. No two days are ever the same. I've a good balance between being creative, delivering projects and working with participants, and as a manager/administrator, developing and evaluating the programme and reporting to our funding body, the Big Lottery Fund."

As well as planning an Act Now! festival, Caroline is this summer working with a group of volunteer youth wardens from a disadvantaged neighbourhood on a collaborative arts project involving local performance groups Skylight Circus Arts and Spiral Dance.

Caroline, whose previous role was creative learning officer with Cumbernauld Theatre in Scotland, is also running her first Bronze Arts Award scheme and hosting a one-off drama workshop for young people visiting from Chernobyl.

On her time with us, she said: "The practical skills that I gained while studying are the reason I've been constantly in work since I graduated. But not only that, for on the Community Drama course, you are asked to question why you're running a project, who is benefiting from it and how it fits in with current issues and the social context."

## Thunder, lighting and the Coldplay cloud



Heading off on tour around southern Europe with Coldplay, Mark Goodall was hoping for a little sunshine. Instead the freelance lighting technician joked: "I've been working under the Coldplay cloud."

Mark added: "The band decided that they didn't want a roof on any of the stadiums for their gigs. So far they have played in Italy, Spain, Portugal and the south of France and it's rained absolutely everywhere."

Working for Lite Alternative, Mark is responsible for setting up lighting stage left at the concerts. He said: "There has been a lot of abseiling: accessing lights by rope to empty out water. In Madrid, I was 15 metres from the ground operating a spotlight in torrential rain with lightning flashing and thunder overhead."

"Chris Martin appears to enjoy performing drenched to the skin. The band are soaking wet, the crowd of over 50,000 people are soaking wet, but they seem to bounce off each other and everyone has a great time."

No stranger to lighting stadium fillers, the 2008 Theatre and Performance Technology graduate has previously toured with Foo Fighters and Kings of Leon.

When we caught up with Mark, he was back in the warehouse, cleaning and maintaining the unusually dirty equipment before heading off on the next leg of the tour. From mid August, he will be travelling around Eastern Europe with the band. This time he has his fingers crossed for a heatwave.

## Victoria-ous winner of BBC fellowship



Winning the BBC Norman Beaton Fellowship led to a whirlwind five months for Victoria Hardy. "I climbed rocky mountains, got shot off a horse and carriage, fell out of the sky, climbed out of a burning building and camped in the Arctic," she told us. "And it was all created just using the power of audio."

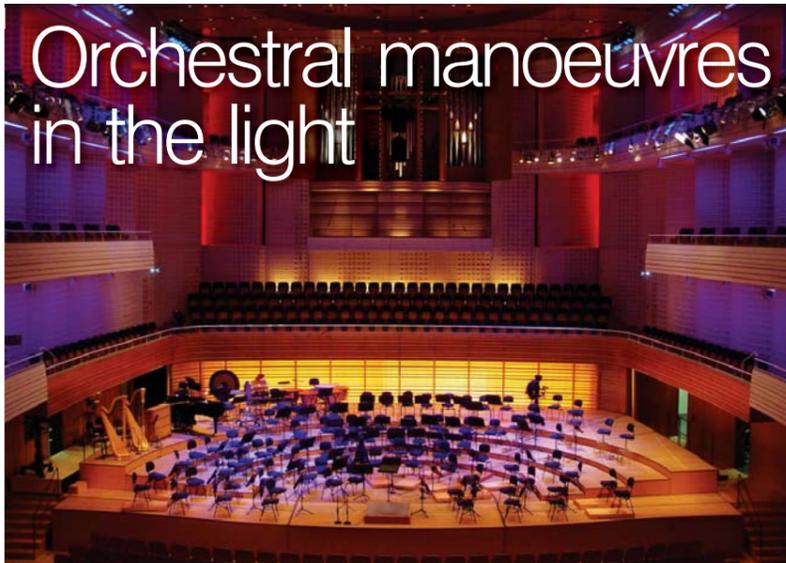
The 2010 Acting graduate was awarded a contract with BBC Radio Drama Rep Company last summer, after three rounds of successful auditions saw her win the fellowship. She explained: "I recorded 28 plays and nine voice-overs. I learnt so much during the five months it's hard to believe it was such a short time... Radio is very fast-paced. There is no rehearsal time and you may be working on a number of plays each week, even more than one each day. You learn to trust your instincts and your producers very quickly."

"I worked with a host of amazing producers, writers and engineers as well as some fantastic actors and real heroes including Bill Nighy, Brian Cox, Sally Phillips, Trevor Peacock, Billy Connolly, Katherine Parkinson and John Sessions."

Victoria, from Dorset, puts her radio success down to her large repertoire of accents, and the fact that she can pick up dialects and change voices quickly.

She would love to do more radio drama and urged other actors to give it a try: "It's a fantastic medium that many of my generation have had little or no experience of even listening to, let alone performing in... There is some real grit and drama as well as some fantastic comedy on the radio. It's also a great place to hear brilliant new writing."

## Orchestral manoeuvres in the light



Concert hall in Lucerne

Creating lighting suitable for a world-class symphony orchestra to perform by and designing lighting to enhance DVD and HD broadcast are skills that are distinctly at odds. For Hendrik Thomas, the challenge is to combine the two. That's because when he creates lighting for performances by the London, New York and Berlin philharmonic orchestras, these are simultaneously broadcast on TV or recorded for DVD, Blu Ray or HD download.

The 2009 Theatre and Performance Design graduate explained: "Orchestras are used to getting only top light in order to be able to read their scores best. A broadcast situation completely changes the creative aspect in terms of using lighting positions, angles, intensity, colour, structure and quality. I have to make sure that the lighting design works for each camera angle and movement and, at the same time, that none of the musicians will get distracted by any of the TV lighting units. This is a constant challenge for me in each broadcast production and won't work without compromises from both sides."

Hendrik is used to working in some

of the world's leading concert halls, but even he was awed by the heritage of the setting for one of his recent projects. He designed the lighting for a series of concerts with the 800-year-old St Thomas Boys Choir in the 12th century St Thomas Church, Leipzig, in his native Germany. Hendrik reflected: "You have to imagine that about 300 years ago Johann Sebastian Bach conducted that choir and things haven't changed much since then."

Not all of Hendrik's work is in the classical field – he is currently a consultant on an architectural lighting project for Berlin's district government.

He also recently worked on a physical rock opera by Swiss theatre company Roikkuva, with several other LIPA alumni. The production manager, Mike Durrer, graduated in 2009 alongside Hendrik, who reminisced: "We became great friends while at LIPA and spent a lot of time at the Quarter café, discussing and dreaming about how it might be to have our own show on stage at some point."

The other graduates who collaborated on Roikkuva were Kathrin Bigler (Community Arts 2003) and Georg Spindler (TPT 2008).

## Musical stages



Katie as Helen Shapiro in 20th Century Boy. Photograph by mikedwasniak.co.uk

Katie Bernstein has been busy blazing a career trail in the world of musical theatre while pursuing her second passion – gigging.

The 2011 Acting graduate has been performing in new musical theatre productions as well as collaborating with *Departure Lounge* writer Dougal Irvine and singing in a nightclub band.

This summer she was in the four-strong cast of Polka Theatre's production of *Run!*. A lively new musical performed in Wimbledon about a school sports day event, *Run!* was cast by the National Theatre and directed and choreographed by fellow LIPA graduates Adam Penford (Acting 2001) and Emma Annetts (Dance 2001) respectively.

The 23-year-old was also at Ipswich's New Wolsey Theatre in *20th Century Boy*, a musical about the late T-Rex frontman Marc Bolan. Katie portrayed 60s pop icon and school friend of Bolan, Helen Shapiro. She also performed with Kerry Ellis in the *Godspell* 40th Anniversary Concert at Manchester's Palace Theatre.

In parallel to this, Manchester native Katie has been singing in a soul/funk outfit at Mark Ronson's club nights at The Arts Club in Mayfair, London and performing Irvine's songs at various functions in the capital.

Katie, who studied for a Diploma in Performing Arts (Acting) before her degree, said: "The foundation course was brilliant. It really helped me find a direction. Before I came to LIPA, I was doing a lot of gigging and heading down the path of recording artist/singer and it made me fall in love with the acting side and make a decision that that was what I wanted to do. LIPA really trained me to think as an actor who sings, rather than the other way round like a lot of musical theatre seems to be."

"I appreciate the opportunities I've had so far and I approach it all with the mind-set of staying grounded and not taking it all for granted."

She began collaborating with Irvine after she performed one of the writer's songs at a Stephen Sondheim competition for UK drama school students, in which she was runner-up.

## Richard's first follows *Richard II*



Theatre designer Richard Kent has been given the helm of his first West End musical after working on the critically acclaimed production of *Richard II* at the Donmar Warehouse.

The 26-year-old is collaborating with Broadway composer Jason Robert Brown on his Apollo Theatre run of *13*, a rock-infused morality tale about a cool, 13-year-old New Yorker exiled to the country after his parents separate.

Richard said: "*13* is the first musical I've designed myself. I've worked as an associate on many but designing one yourself is very different. Ultimately, when designing either a play or a musical, it's the same process, my physical working practices don't change. An audience does expect more from musicals, though, so the design has to live up to those expectations."

"Having music as a driving force behind the show can sometimes make it easier to imagine the world you are creating but there are no set rules. You just have to explore."

Along with deploying his skills in musical theatre, Richard (Theatre and Performance Design 2007) is adding another Shakespeare credit to his CV.

He is to design *Macbeth* for Sheffield Crucible, which opens in September.

Starring Eddie Redmayne, *Richard II* received four- and five-star reviews.

The *Guardian* said of the set and costume: "Richard Kent's opulent, split-level design, all golden gothic arches and wafts of incense, brilliantly captures the medieval age."

Richard, originally from near Bury St Edmunds, commented: "Being asked to design *Richard II* was an incredible honour, and the very warm reception to my set and costumes was wonderful."

"It was Michael Grandage's last show at the Donmar as artistic director, so there was lots of pressure to do the very best job."

As well as tackling more of Shakespeare's plays, Richard would like to continue working on musicals:

"I'd love to design any piece by Sondheim and I've always loved the idea of designing *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*. It's such a fun show, but with real heart and emotion. The characters and settings were immortalised in the 2001 film, but I think there's still a lot of fun to be had with it."

## Management maestro

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Entertainment industry figures also nominate and vote for the finalists. Actor John Altman, best known for his role as villain Nick Cotton in British soap *EastEnders*, presented Adam with his award.

Adam, who previously worked in marketing for two other theatres, said: "It's really lovely and, as it's voted for by people in the industry, it feels very nice to have that approval and 'pat on the back'."

"It reflects the hard work of the whole team and how we've worked together. To have that recognised made me very proud of my team and the part I've played."

Since joining the 630-seat theatre, Adam (Management 2003) has programmed a string of high-profile acts including Lee Evans, Alan Carr, Lesley Garrett, Barbara Dickson, Birmingham Royal Ballet and Flawless. This season sees performances from LIPA patron – Joan Armatrading, Bob Geldof, Kevin Bridges and Greg Davies.

Overall tickets sales are up 3% year on year and the venue's last pantomime generated a 14% year on year boost in sales.

On the secret to his success, Adam, originally from Shrewsbury, said: "I think the key is to be passionate about what you do, honest and open to new ideas and not be afraid to stick your neck out and try something new, but more and more I'm discovering it's all about communication. If you can communicate your idea and where you want to be, you can take your team with you and they will probably be the deciding factor in whether you get there or not."

## Up in the air



Photograph by Andy Pontin

Hanging upside down with her feet hooked around a hoop four metres above the ground, Rebecca Rennison is all grace and fluidity: arching her body through the circle with complete assurance. The 2007 Dance graduate created the four-minute long aerial hoop routine for her act on the cruise ship *Azura* and watching her perform suspended above the heads of an entranced audience, she looks entirely at home.

Becki, from Nottingham, spent ten weeks in rehearsal, then over nine months at sea as a featured aerial artist on the P&O liner. There were three elements to her aerial work: aside from the hoop, she performed hanging from silks and with a Spanish web. The latter saw her suspended by one arm from a ring at the end of a rope turned by a man on the stage below with increasing speed until her body became a horizontal blur.

The 26-year-old seems relaxed about the safety aspect of her act, she said: "The danger is relative; there are no mats, or harness. The height isn't too bad, but when the weather was windy or rough, the hoop would swing from side to side, which would alter the angle of the movements in relation to the hoop. You have to concentrate and know your limits."

Her introduction to aerial work happened while she was studying. She explained: "My first taste of (aerial) silks was actually from another student at LIPA – a designer, so it just goes to show the mix of students there is very important."

She continued: "I worked in two circuses as a dancer and I find movement in the air exciting to watch. My boyfriend at the time was a flying-trapeze artist. We trained almost every day, so I began to practise a lot. On the ship I wanted to create something that was my own."

Having finished her contract in April, Becki decided she was ready for a spell on dry land. She is now working on a new act and training at My Aerial Home. You can see her skills in action at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6PAZgw\\_ul9Y](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6PAZgw_ul9Y) ([www.myaerialhome.co.uk/](http://www.myaerialhome.co.uk/))

## Rocking under the midnight sun

Lasse pictured far right with his band Cazadores. Photograph by Carl Critica



Picture a beach, surrounded by mountains and trees, on which the sun never sets. Add 40 bands and a capacity crowd of 6,000 revellers each day and you have the Bukta Festival. This is a stage for Norwegian rock acts and top international artists in what could well be one of the most beautiful festival sites in the world.

Bukta takes place in northern Norway, inside the Arctic Circle, this year from 19th to 21st July. In charge of production is Lasse Pettersen, who has been involved in producing the festival in his home town of Tromsø since he graduated from the Management programme in 2007.

Leading a team of 40 staff and 500 volunteers, he explained what is involved: "I oversee all stages of the process from planning and preparations, negotiating good deals with suppliers and partners, to rigging the festival area and taking it down again. Basically, what we do is build a little city on the beach, with all necessary infrastructure, so there are a lot of different elements and things to consider... I am also involved with

the booking of bands and get to travel a lot to check out new bands at various festivals and industry shindigs.

"This year we have The Cardigans, Rival Sons, Lissie, Wolfmother, Thin Lizzy and many more. Over the years we've had legends like Patti Smith, Motörhead, Iggy & The Stooges and Grinderman."

Producing the festival is a year-round job for Lasse, but he still finds time for his work as a newly elected member of the Norwegian Rock Association, lobbying to safeguard and develop conditions for concert organisers in Norway.

He will also be performing at festivals in Norway through the summer as guitarist with the band Cazadores. The title track of their recent EP release *Islands* has been getting regular airplay on Norwegian radio, and their debut album is due for release in November.

Most importantly, he recently became a dad for the first time to baby Albert, a potential Bukta volunteer of the future ([www.bukta.no/](http://www.bukta.no/)).

## Direct action

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He has also worked at the Donmar Warehouse, where he was the associate director for four years, directing *Inadmissible Evidence*, *Piaf* and *Passion* (which won the Evening Standard Award for best musical), among others.

This summer, Jamie (Acting 2002) directed *The Duchess of Malfi* at the Old Vic, working alongside fellow LIPA alumni Madeline Appiah (Acting 2005) and Adam Burton (Acting 1999). He also opened *The School for Scandal*, another 18th century comedy, at Theatre Royal, Bath.

Next, he will be making his Broadway debut, directing *Cyrano de Bergerac* at the American Airlines Theatre.

Although he trained as an actor, and after graduation worked briefly in TV, theatre and film, Jamie has always been drawn to directing. His first public outing was William Finn's musical *Falsettoland* at the Edinburgh Festival, which he first did while with us.

He has also opened world premieres for the Royal Court and the Royal Shakespeare Company, including *The Pride*, for which he won an Olivier Award for outstanding achievement.

## Zoë's living the dream

Zoë Jackson may have trained as a dancer, but today she is just as likely to be tapping up organisations for sponsorship as doing the soft shoe shuffle.

That's because the 22-year-old entrepreneur runs a successful school of performing arts called Living the Dream, which works with some 500 young people and recently launched a professional dance company and a charitable foundation.

Zoë also is working with Virgin Media to produce a Living the Dream Dance app for their TiVo television service, which features performances and classes by, and interviews with, top UK dancers.

The 2010 Dance graduate, who runs her business in her hometown of St. Albans, is also looking to launch a talent agency, widen access to performing arts training through her not-for-profit Dream Foundation and develop her Living the Dream dancewear brand.

Her entrepreneurial spirit has not gone unrecognised. Zoë has scooped business awards and British business tycoon and LIPA patron Sir Richard Branson has championed her. Sir Richard has appointed her to his Virgin Media Pioneers taskforce for young entrepreneurs, as well as inviting her to the launch of his book *Screw Business as Usual* and to join him on the panel of the 2011 Global Entrepreneurship Congress, held in Liverpool.

As a Virgin Media Pioneer, she has held discussions about funding for young entrepreneurs with Business Secretary Vince Cable and Prime Minister David Cameron.

Zoë, who started Living the Dream at 16 to help pay her National Youth Theatre course fees, said: "I love being my own boss, being creative every day, getting to work with people who inspire me (professionals and our students) and to see our performers grow into confident, talented and ambitious young people."

On her work as a Virgin Media Pioneer, she commented: "I was so excited to talk on a panel with Richard Branson! I had met him a few times before, notably being selected to speak at his book launch. The Global Entrepreneurship Congress in Liverpool was amazing and he is an incredibly down to earth guy.

"His main tip was one of his mottos, 'doing good is good for business', which I am passionate about as Living the Dream's ethos fits it completely."

The goal of Zoë, who draws on the talents of LIPA graduate dancers, musicians and designers to help run Living the Dream, is to "become a pioneer in the performing arts industry and a household name".



Zoë with British business tycoon Sir Richard Branson

## Kate's in the pink with Legally Blonde

Kate with Brewster, who plays the role of Bruiser in Legally Blonde the Musical

Kate Margretts may work on *Legally Blonde the Musical*, but what she does is by no means a trial.

The 26-year-old is enjoying her role as assistant stage manager and book cover for the production, which is currently on tour.

Kate joined the *Legally Blonde the Musical* team last year, and has since criss-crossed the UK, racking up plenty of experience along the way.

She said: "I love how varied my job is. I get to travel around the country and explore many cities I've never visited, work in different theatres with different people and I have the opportunity to follow my own plot and to cue the show, too."

Prior to joining the touring production of the Olivier Award-winning musical, *Legally Blonde the Musical* (Theatre and Performance Technology 2007), who hails from Ross-on-Wye, worked in areas such as company management, artist liaison and pyrotechnics.

About her current role, she explained: "My main job is to set up and run the SL wing in each venue and manage crew to assist me. I also work with the rest of the stage management team to care for the company with regard to wellbeing and health and safety, ensure the show runs smoothly, continue prop and set maintenance and assist in rehearsals.



In addition to this (the book cover aspect of my job title), I call the show two to three times a week. When the deputy stage manager is off or covering the stage manager, I step up to fulfil her role."

In the wings, she also gets to work with some of the show's four-legged cast members, including Brewster the pedigree Chihuahua, who plays the role of Bruiser, the pampered pet pooch of female lead Elle Woods.

## Bryan signs to Gotham Producers



Canadian Bryan Wilson is one of six recording engineers, mixers and producers signed to a new boutique management venture that operates out of London and New York.

The 26-year-old is part of Gotham Producers, launched this year to pair emerging and established artists from across North America and Europe with skilled and experienced studio professionals.

His Gotham stablemates include fellow LIPA graduate and Arctic Monkeys producer Mike Crossey (Sound Technology 2001).

The appointment is the latest career step for Bryan, who, as part of his remit, works as both producer and engineer, seeking out and developing new acts, along with collaborating with established artists.

Bryan said: "Hooking up with Gotham was the logical next step in getting me where I want to be professionally and personally, helping to meet my goals much quicker, while developing my career on an assortment of projects."

Gotham Producers is a joint venture between New York-based artist management company, Black Math and the UK's largest group of recording studios, Miloco, where Bryan has spent the last couple of years as the right-hand man to producer Craig Silvey (Arcade Fire, Portishead, The Horrors), while also developing his own portfolio of recording and mixing credits on a variety of records.

The Toronto native has been involved in projects by a wide range of artists from Britney Spears, Toni Braxton, Katy B and Calvin Harris, to Grinderman, Noah & the Whale, Mumford & Sons, and Graham Coxon.

On his life in the industry, Bryan (Sound Technology 2008) said: "It's really rewarding. It's not your average 9 to 5 job. You wake up and spend your day working with musicians. It's great when you get that buzz in the studio when things just come together and you start feeding off each other musically."

# Giddy Ox takes the bull by the horns



In times like these, theatregoers want value for money and to know they're going to have a great night out.

It is this mood that encouraged producer Giuliano Crispini to plough all his energies into producing in the commercial theatre sector.

The 2004 Acting graduate's latest production is the Olivier Award-winning comedy *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice*, which opens this September at the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre in Guildford before touring the UK until June 2013.

Among the cast are Beverley Callard (Liz McDonald from *Coronation Street*), Ray Quinn (from *X Factor* and *Dancing on Ice*) and the stage and screen actor, and LIPA companion, Joe McGann.

The Guernsey-born producer's production company, Giddy Ox, was founded five years ago to develop new theatre shows and produce them on the UK touring circuit. This was the path the company took before government cuts meant many council-run mid-scale receiving houses had no money to buy in new shows or market them effectively.

Giuliano, 30, commented: "This gave us

a clear path for the company: scale up production and produce in the large-scale commercial theatre sector where profits are still being generated. *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice* promises to be a sparkling night of comedy, divas and romance. It's precisely the type of show that fits in with our company's producing goals. I've had to invest everything in this current project and have very much put all our eggs into one basket. So far the ticket sales seem very healthy, but I'm sure there will be many more sleepless nights yet to come."

Before Giddy Ox, Giuliano worked as an actor, director and writer. It was his desire to create his own work – and jobs for other artists – that inspired him to enter the world of production. Previous shows include the critically acclaimed *Lotty's War* and the multi-award winning show *The Rebel Cell*.

He explained: "There are many great artists out there and it's wonderful being able to provide a platform for them to work their magic on. I often work with LIPA graduates. Morgan Large (Theatre and Performance Design 2003) is our designer for *Little Voice* and John Cockerill (Acting 2004) is in the ensemble."

# Donmar delight for composer

Composer Michael Bruce has landed a high-profile role at one of London's most prestigious theatres.

Michael, who as a youth taught himself to play the piano at school and in local music shops in his home city of Aberdeen, Scotland, has been appointed composer in residence of the Donmar Warehouse.

The 2006 Music graduate has already composed his first Donmar score. The play, George Farquhar's classic comedy *The Recruiting Officer*, was a critical success at the Donmar earlier this year.

Michael said: "The Donmar's a wonderful place to work at. It's quite a small operation, so it's warm and friendly. *The Recruiting Officer* had a live five-piece actor/musician band (two of whom were LIPA graduates), which was a brilliant way to start in my role as composer in residence. Music was a big part of that production, so it was thrilling to arrive with a bang."

The appointment is the latest career move for the 28-year-old, who spent his teenage

years writing songs in his bedroom and learning the violin before developing his songwriting craft at LIPA.

On the Donmar, Michael enthused: "I'm thrilled. As a venue, it has a reputation for producing work of the highest standard. Being a part of the creative team behind its future is both exhilarating and humbling."

In addition to *The Recruiting Officer*, he has been working on productions such as *The Physicists* and *Berenice* at the Donmar as well as *Events while Guarding the Bofors Gun* at Finborough Theatre and *Noises Off* at the Novello Theatre in the West End.

After graduation, he won the inaugural Notes for the Stage Prize for new musical writing, following which he showcased his songs in a West End gala concert and worked as a musical director and composer on a number of productions. His work has been performed at various venues in the English capital including the National Theatre and The Bush Theatre.

Michael has released an album of his work, Michael Bruce: Unwritten Songs.

# Dream job for new graduate Dan

Dan Evans had no worries about what he would be doing after graduating last year. He had one day off to attend the ceremony in July and then it was back on tour with the hit rock 'n' roll musical *Dreamboats and Petticoats*.

The Sound Technology graduate was delighted to have landed a job on the show, through professional contacts he made at LIPA. He started work at the beginning of June and explained: "I was sound No. 2, in charge of radio mics and the instruments that the cast played on stage. Some of the instruments I don't play myself, so maintaining them was a learning experience. Overall, though, I felt quite happy as I had done the same sort of role both on LIPA shows and externally while I was studying."

Monday would see Londoner Dan and his No. 1 start bright and early at 8am setting up in a new venue, where the show would play until Saturday, when they would load-out ready to move on after eight performances.

The tour covered a range of very different venues from town halls to some of the UK's biggest theatres. Dan said: "I enjoyed the challenge of getting the show sounding right in each place, no matter what the facilities."

"It was a fun, energetic show to work on. Most of the audiences were older, as the 60s music appealed to people who were young when the songs were hits. Still, by the end of every show, people were dancing in the aisles – the cast would get them up to join in, so they had no choice!"

The cast and crew had a memorable stop in Luxembourg, to see how the Essex-based show would appeal to a European audience. Dan told us: "We stayed in a five-star hotel, which was a real luxury compared to some of the digs we had stayed in. The theatre was very well equipped and though the language barrier slowed things down a bit, we had a great week and the audiences loved it."

Dan finished working on the show in May and is currently working on the Olympic ceremonies rehearsals.



# Trio triumph

Folk-rock trio The Staves, consisting of LIPA graduate Jessica Staveley-Taylor (Music 2010) and her sisters Emily and Camilla, are hitting a high note this year.

The band have signed to Atlantic Records, got their debut album due out in the autumn and been tipped for success by the *Guardian* newspaper, iTunes and entertainment group HMV.

On top of this, the sisters are racking up a wealth of touring experience both here and in North America, having done a headline tour and supported acts like Michael Kiwanuka, The Civil Wars and Bon Iver. This summer they are hitting the UK festival circuit before heading back to the US in October to perform at Austin City Limits Music Festival.

"It's all very exciting," enthused Jessica. "Being tipped for good things this year is really flattering, especially coming from the *Guardian* and HMV, but we try not to listen to any of that and just get on with it."

On the contract with Atlantic Records, on whose label they will release their self-titled debut album, she said: "Signing was a big deal for us. Having always done everything ourselves, it was a big decision to enter into a contract with a label – there are obligations and responsibilities that come with it – but they really share our vision and are incredibly supportive and sympathetic of what we do."

The Staves, whose close harmony style draws comparisons to that of Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young, were recipients of a £2,500 Development Award at the 2009



From the left, Jessica, Emily, and Camilla Staveley-Taylor. Photograph by Rebecca Miller

Musicians Benevolent Fund Songwriting Awards Showcase Final (open to acts from UK colleges and universities). From Watford but with Liverpool roots, the guitar and ukulele-playing sisters have performed together since childhood, including during Jessica's time with us.

On life at LIPA, Jessica commented: "LIPA is great as it fosters an environment in which creativity happens, which isn't an easy thing to do. It's inspiring to be surrounded by such a varied group of musicians from all parts of the world and to have access to the facilities."

"LIPA is connected to the industry, so, when I felt I needed a lawyer, it was through LIPA that I met ours, Ann Harrison [a LIPA companion], who helped me navigate some of the more intricate aspects of the game."

# Reaching out through music



Kim Edgar may be primarily a solo artist, but the Scottish singer-songwriter knows a thing or two about deploying her musical skills in a group context.

For Kim, who recently released her second album, *The Ornate Lie*, to critical acclaim, also works with two non-profit organisations, using the power of song to help improve people's lives.

When not recording or gigging – she is this summer playing Edinburgh Festival Fringe and the Big Tent and supporting Hue and Cry – she works with disadvantaged young people and female prisoners.

Her involvement with the former is through The BIG Project, a young people's charity that works in a deprived area of Edinburgh. Kim directs its youth choir and penned two commissioned inspirational songs, which the youngsters sang at Edinburgh Castle as part of the Olympics celebrations.

The 2002 Diploma in Popular Music and Sound Technology graduate also works with female prisoners, using group singing to help build their self-image and reduce the risk of their reoffending.

Like her group work, Kim's new album is concerned with those at risk in society. Kim explained: "The Ornate Lie tackles some sombre topics (the objectification of women, child neglect and mortality), but ultimately it's a hopeful album – hopeful because love remains beyond all the hard stuff in life."

The album has received critical acclaim from *BBC Radio Scotland* and the *Daily Record*.

Kim, 33, from South Queensferry, Edinburgh, explained: "I'm delighted when people 'get' my songwriting, especially when they like it enough to recommend it or share my songs through the radio or the press."

Ultimately, what I'm trying to do is to engage and connect with people through the songs, so I'm grateful when people understand where I'm coming from and help my songs to be heard."

On her time at LIPA, Kim, who is also a member of the Scottish-Canadian musical collective the Burns Unit, said she particularly enjoyed the collaborative environment and the studio projects:

"The opportunity to record my own songs (even in the middle of the night!) was so exciting, and I've never lost the buzz of being in a recording studio that I first experienced at LIPA. I also learned a lot from my Pop Dip classmates, who were generous in sharing their approaches to songwriting and their musical knowledge."

# Yin, yang and the power of pop up



Lorraine teaching song at Angel Shed

Lorraine Grout has found her ideal mix for professional fulfilment: leading Angel Shed theatre and working with offenders, along with what she describes as "the power of pop up". She explained: "For me working at Angel Shed and in prisons are like yin and yang: two sides of the work. They provide me with challenge and satisfaction and I never get bored."

Angel Shed is a children's and youth theatre company based in Islington, part of a network established by Chickenshed, the renowned inclusive theatre company.

Lorraine, who is from Islington, was appointed artistic director of Angel Shed in 2006. Since then she has written and directed the productions and been instrumental in creating the solid structure that the company enjoys today. She said: "We get core funding, which means that we know we can put on several productions every year and we have long-standing staff and volunteers on the team. The important thing is to keep training and driving the message home that everyone is equal and must be included. There can be no favourites."

Alongside her role at Angel Shed, the 2004 Community Arts graduate has worked extensively with young offenders. She spent five years as a drama teacher at HMP YO1 Feltham supporting 2,000 inmates annually. She told us: "It's like a hidden world, very different from any other environment I've worked in. There are all sorts of constraints because of the security implications and I think 'civilians' like me were sometimes viewed as an annoyance by the guards, probably because I wanted to put on a full artistic programme! Teaching 12 boys and young men in a classroom on your own means that you have to take complete control and be strict beyond belief."

A passionate believer in the power of the arts to transform lives and empower people to create change, Lorraine has now established a new company, Paper Dog Productions, with a co-worker from Feltham. They collaborate with an artist who builds large-scale pop up sets from card so that they can take them into prison and use as the backdrop for their plays. Last November this technique allowed them to quickly create an impressive production called *Flight of Freedom* with a group in HMP Pentonville.

In September she will start her MA in Dramatherapy at the University of Roehampton, in order to become a Health Professions Council registered dramatherapist.

[www.angelsheadtheatre.org.uk](http://www.angelsheadtheatre.org.uk)

# Alumni reunions 2012

**Here**  
 Alumni from 2005, 2006 and 2007 were reunited here on Saturday 31st March. They met up with staff and shared a bite to eat in their old haunt, our bar. Film footage of their graduation years brought back memories of living in Cubitt House, watching Sir Ian McKellen deliver a master class, and a first meeting for one couple that led to a trip down the aisle. Management graduates admitted that Jeremy's "exhilarating" lectures in finance really did equip them with skills that they use in work on a daily basis, and for at least one member of the audience her year studying postgraduate Acting was one of the best of her life... Pictures one to four show our graduates and staff enjoying catching up in the bar and café. Pictures five to six show the graduates reminiscing in our studio theatre.



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**In Norway**  
 We held our first international reunion in February to coincide with our annual Norwegian auditions. Cosy Café Sør in Oslo was the spot. Surrounded by wood and warm lighting, it felt as if we were back in our bar... but somewhere else: the same tangible air of belonging and affection as we ploughed through booze and pizza. Mark gave a short address and you can see the cheers as this ended in picture seven. Picture eight to ten show graduates and our staff together again throughout the evening.



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We aren't completely certain yet but we plan to hold our next international graduate reunion next year in Germany. You can see more photographs from the two events on our alumni website and alumni Facebook group page.

## Luc Bonnet

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of Luc Bonnet. Luc, a former Sound Technology student, joined us in 2003 and graduated in 2006. He died on May 25th following a road accident in Berlin. Splitting his time between LA and Berlin, Luc had carved out an impressive career as an engineer and music editor in the world of film orchestration. Jon Thornton, Head of Sound Technology said: "I recall seeing Luc only a year ago when he visited, and remember being just so incredibly impressed and proud of him – with his poise, passion and sheer grasp of the industry he was now working in so successfully. At the same time, he'd lost none of the caring, humorous and loving side of his personality that I'll remember him most for. I will miss him enormously."

Another of his former lecturers wrote: "I think he was one of the most genuinely pleasant, endearing and vibrant people we've ever had on the course and I'm really saddened that we won't see him again. But when I think of him I remember he was always smiling, always upbeat, always good to be around. He'll be missed."

Our deepest sympathy goes to Luc's family and friends.

## Alumni attitude survey

We carried out a survey of our alumni in February to find out what you think about the services we offer. More than 450 of you completed the questionnaire – a big thank you to everyone who took part.

Some of the main things you asked for were more ways to network with each other, publicise vacancies and find out about work opportunities. We already have a facebook group for LIPA Alumni and we would love you to join us. Feel free to use it to tell other graduates about job openings, projects you need someone to collaborate on or just to ask for some help or advice – it's your group.

You can follow us on Twitter @LIPA\_Alumni so tell us about your gig, opening night or other news and we'll give you a tweet!

Don't forget you can still use the LIPA web site to network, by registering at <http://www.lipa.ac.uk/content/AlumniHome.aspx> You can search for other graduates using the site, and see all of the back copies of See Me Now. Finally, if you are on LinkedIn you can join our group there too.

## Update from our CEO

Swept up with the warmth of our first reunion away from England, I announced in Oslo that we had bought the art school next to us and that we were planning a performing arts school. It was just a short speech, so here's a bit more detail.

The building next door to us (pictured right), at least the section running along Mount Street, was built by the original people who (in the early 1800s) created The Liverpool Institute. If you look up at the lintel above our Mount Street entrance, you'll see underneath this name "and School of Art". This was because, although the old institute offered art, the demand outgrew the space, so they built along the street. So, once again, both buildings are going to be united for what they were built for: learning.



That's one bit of romance. The other bit is that, as you know, Paul and George were school boys in the building you learnt in. You may not know that John studied at the art school next door. When Paul came up recently (here pictured with me and Acting graduate Liz White who performed in *The Woman in Black* with Daniel Radcliffe of *Harry Potter* fame), he spent a bit of time hunting around for John's signature at the back of the old lecture hall.

The final bit of romance is that we now own all the buildings on our site. You can see all our buildings in the aerial photograph below.

But this isn't why we bought the building! We are short of big spaces for rehearsals, another performance space

like the Sennheiser Studio Theatre (now called 'The Senn') and there's no space to offer more teaching. We were considering constructing a new building along Upper Duke Street when the Art School came on the market. We realised we could buy almost double the space at almost three-quarters of the price, even with adaptations. Liverpool John Moores University are leasing the building until June 2013, so it will be a while until everything is as we'd like it.

Now the school. The UK government is encouraging anyone to start a new school (which can specialise), provided that there are enough local people who actually want what the school is going to offer. So we are going to apply. It's clear that, for many performing arts skills, the earlier you start the better so the idea is to twin a primary and a secondary school. This won't fit on our site. For one thing, we don't have playing fields! The government is also encouraging universities to start teaching schools. Edge Hill University would like to start one, so we want to twin both initiatives. I hope by the time I next write to you, we'll know if our bid has worked. Actually, at the end of June, I'll know if our governing body has agreed we go for this. First things first.

Have you any idea how many people have graduated from us since we began? I didn't. It's 3,400. I don't know how many read this, but, as I said (because I always say this) at your graduation, you are the reason why we started the place and why we do what we do – so, all the best generally and with the things you now do,

*Mark*



# Graduation 2012

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

## Companions

### Jason Barnes



Now a freelance lecturer and consultant, his career as a stage manager has included venues like Theatre Royal Windsor, the Unicorn Theatre and the Mercer County Theater (New Jersey, USA). His longest association has been with the National Theatre as stage manager to start with, segueing into being the production manager for the Cottesloe for over 250 productions. He has contributed as a board member or a trustee to the British Theatre

Association, the Association of British Theatre Technicians and the Theatres Trust. He has contributed to publications and spoken at international conferences, as well as participating in touring and "found space" productions.

### Matthew Bourne



Matthew has brought classical dance forms to a popular audience with panache, humour and visual flair. He is a five-time Olivier Award winner and the only British director to have won the Tony Award for both best choreographer and best director of a musical. He co-created his first company and was the artistic director for 15 years, creating his, perhaps, signature *Swan Lake*, which still tours the world. In 2002, he co-started a new company, which was

responsible for *Nutcracker!* which, aside from sell-out seasons, became the first ballet to be screened by BBC1 in over 20 years. He has choreographed revivals of *Oliver!*, *South Pacific* and *Mary Poppins* and one-off shows, like *French and Saunders Live*.

### Kevin Godley



Kevin was a founder member of the band 10cc, which hit public consciousness in 1972. The band created some ten top-selling singles (that included *I'm Not in Love*) before breaking up some four years later. At that point, Kevin and Lol Creme left to explore. This resulted in six albums and four hit singles, as well as Gizmo, a device they dreamed up to create orchestra sounds on a guitar. In the early 80s, Godley and Creme (as they were known) became the UK's music

video creators, creating videos for The Police, Culture Club, Frankie Goes to Hollywood, Lou Reed, Eric Clapton and Peter Dinklage. The partnership split up in the late 80s. Kevin went on producing music promos for U2, Frank Sinatra, Katie Melua and Paul McCartney, as well as commercials.

### Michael Harrison



Michael is arguably the UK's pantomime production king... and at 32! As managing director of Qdos Pantomime Division, he is responsible for providing some 24 pantos across the UK this Christmas. The company is the largest panto producer in the world employing 700 actors, dancers, musicians, and stage staff. He has produced over 20 pantos in the UK and abroad. He has also produced tours of *Chess*, *Aspects of Love* and *The Witches of Eastwick*,

as well as co-producing Elaine Paige's last two concert tours and her 40th anniversary tour. He created the first panto in the 300-seat SECC Glasgow and this year, is directing a new version of *Cinderella* at the Birmingham Hippodrome with Brian Conley and Lynda Bellingham.

### Gary Lloyd



The list of Gary's international work as a choreographer and creative director for stage, screen and theatre is extensive. Well-known acts he has worked with include some 34 solo artists and groups from Leona Lewis and Robbie Williams to All Angels and Soul II Soul. Theatre credits include national tours of shows like *Hair*, *Fame* and *Thriller Live!*, as well as one-offs like *Animal Farm* (West Yorkshire Playhouse) and *Amadeus* (Sheffield Crucible) and international tours of *My Fair Lady*, *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Zorro the Musical*. Gary's television credits include *Comic Relief* and *The Royal Variety Performance*.

Then there are arena tours and national events – a man for all shows.

### Owen Lewis



After working in north-east theatres, Owen's extensive experience as a sound engineer and designer started with touring shows of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Blood Brothers*, *Whistle Down the Wind* and bands. He then worked as production sound engineer for shows like *Evita*, *Cabaret* and *The Crucible* and *The Canterbury Tales* (the latter two for the RSC). He is now working on *Legally Blonde the Musical* and *South Pacific*.

### Pam Schweitzer



Pam's life work has been placing reminiscences within theatre. She created the first Reminiscence Centre and has led the publication of some 30 books of edited and illustrated reminiscences. Much of this has taken place at the Age Exchange Theatre Trust which she founded and where she was its artistic director for 22 years. While there, she created 30 original reminiscence theatre plays, many inter-generational productions and 15 new shows

by older people about their lives. Pam went on to set up and direct a European network of reminiscence arts works and organisations, festivals and collaborative action projects. Aside from this, her current work includes consultancy and being a freelance practitioner.

## Honoured Friend

### Victor Greenberg



Victor has been a friend since our inception. His company, Greenberg Glass, donated mirrors for our dance studios. He has myriad interests that included starting Liverpool Jazz to encourage live jazz performance in the city. As part of this endeavour, he has donated jazz prizes each year and helped us with our music master class programme which he now leads. Aside from this, he has contributed to our annual music festival

Groove on the Green.

## Fela! delight

Nandi Bhebhe is making her Broadway debut, in the award-winning musical *Fela!* at the Al Hirschfeld Theatre.

The 2008 Dance graduate performs the role of Queen Naa Lamiley in the ensemble of the show, which has returned to New York after touring Europe and the US.

Based on the life of the Nigerian bandleader and political activist Fela Kuti, *Fela!* is an Afrobeat-fuelled tale of passion, courage and love. It is choreographed and directed by Bill T. Jones, with co-producers Will Smith, his wife Jada Pinkett-Smith and Shawn "Jay-Z" Carter.

Nandi, originally from Milton Keynes, got involved in the musical after being cast in the European production, which opened at the National Theatre in 2010. Following the show's run there, Nandi joined the European and US tour.

The 25-year-old, also a member of London's Vocab Dance Company, enthused: "I feel so privileged to be working with such a brilliant and talented team, presenting a show full of energy, vibrancy, rhythm and style."

"I'm very much looking forward to the audience and experience the Broadway stage will offer."

The original Broadway production of *Fela!* scooped three Tony Awards.



## Contacting the Editor

Corinne Lewis, The Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts, Mount Street, Liverpool L1 9HF UK. Tel: +44 (0)151 330 3000, email [alumni@lipa.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@lipa.ac.uk)

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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**

