



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

# FOCUS

Autumn 2010

News from the School of Performance and Cultural Industries

## Performance Design Student wins National Lighting Award



This Newsletter is available online at  
[www.leeds.ac.uk/paci/news](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/paci/news)



On the front

## STUDENT WINS NATIONAL AWARD FOR LIGHTING DESIGN

It has just been announced that Tanya Stephenson, a Performance Design student who graduated in July 2010 has been awarded the inaugural Francis Reid Award for Lighting Design. This prestigious National award forms part of Michael Northern Student Design Bursary competition and is awarded annually by the Association of Lighting Designers in conjunction with industry partners ETC and The Mousetrap Foundation, an organisation committed to encouraging young theatre practitioners. It is judged by a distinguished panel of lighting designers and industry representatives. Tanya chose to enter her lighting design work from the third year performance project *Dream/Play* where she worked collaboratively with students from all of the School's undergraduate courses to create an immersive environment for the audience to experience. Tanya describes how the lighting in *Dream/Play* worked: "The Scenographic environment was critical to the way in which this performance was envisioned; it facilitated dramatic development, inspired performers and determined the precise nature of the audience experience. Lighting enabled us to guide the audience subtly through the spaces allowing them to focus on the action as it unfolded. We experimented in using both light and projected light in rehearsal as an inspiration to develop sequences with the performers. In one section, which represented the state of 'deep sleep' we created a very dark space which the audience stood still illuminated only by narrow shafts of light and many audience members commented on how powerful this choreographic sequence was."

Tanya's winning submission will be displayed on the ALD stand at the PLASA show in Earls court in September, where the prize will be officially presented in person by Francis Reid

Front and news Image from *Dream/Play*  
Images by Georges Bacoust

## NEW HEAD OF SCHOOL

In August 2010, Dr Sita Popat became the new Head of the School of Performance & Cultural Industries. Sita began working at the University of Leeds in 2002.



She lectures across the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes on the topics of performance and technology, research methods and dance theory. During her time in PCI, Sita has held a number of roles, including BA (hons) Dance Programme Manager and

Director of Research. She is currently the leader of the Performance Technologies Research Group. She is also active outside the University, editing the International Journal of Performance Arts & Digital Media and being on the Board of Directors for DV8 Physical Theatre. Sita said, "I am very excited about taking on this new role! PCI is an inspiring place to work, with a dynamic, enthusiastic team of staff and students. Our strong links with the community and industry mean that there is always something interesting going on. I am proud to be leading the School for the next five years!"

## STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS

The results of the 2009-10 Programme Surveys for L1 and L2 students and the National Student Survey (for L3 finalists who graduated in July 2010) have been released and the results are very encouraging. 92% of L1 PCI students agreed they were satisfied with their programme and at L2 and L3 the levels of satisfaction have risen from the previous years' surveys in almost all areas.

The detail of the survey results will be shared with students and discussed at the Student Staff Forum. These results help us identify what is working well in the School and where we can make further improvements. Talking with students about the results helps us get a more accurate picture than looking at the figures alone. Using feedback from students, we have, over the past two years, been focusing on improving processes around assessment and feedback and we are pleased to see that the surveys show that students say we are making good progress here.

Staff in the School of PCI are committed to delivering an excellent student experience and we really value student views and comments. We would encourage all students to participate fully in any surveys and discussions about your experience in PCI in order to help us obtain an accurate picture of student views.



Urban Angels Circus Perform 'The Heavenly Court of Madame Fantaisiste'

## RESEARCHERS AND STUDENTS HIT KENDAL CALLING FOR FESTIVAL PERFORMANCE

As part of her ongoing research on interactive performance at music festivals, Dr Alice O'Grady from the School of Performance and Cultural Industries took a team of twelve performers, researchers and volunteers to Kendal Calling Festival at Lowther Deer Park in Cumbria this summer. The performance entitled '**The Heavenly Court of Madame Fantaisiste**' was developed in collaboration with Leeds' based aerial company **Urban Angels Circus** and **Leeds Metropolitan University**. The project has been funded by the **AHRC** (Arts and Humanities Research Council) and forms part of the £5.5 million **Beyond Text** scheme. The aim of the '**Environments for Encounter**' festival project is to examine how audiences interact with and respond differently to relational performance that springs up in and around the festival site depending on changes in context. At Kendal Calling the team performed three times. Once in the trees at night before the official start of the event to a very small crowd of onlookers; during the daytime at the very busy and hectic start of the festival; and on a lazy Sunday afternoon at the end of the festival. Each occasion generated wildly different results.

Dr O'Grady said, "Attempting to make highly visual, opulent and luxurious aerial theatre is difficult at the best of times. Making it truly interactive and situating

it in a muddy field with limited technical resources, lots of competing noise and unpredictable audiences requires real commitment and skill from the whole team. It's what makes this type of work so exciting. I was thrilled with the research data we gathered and how well audiences responded."

To explore the impact of context further Dr O'Grady and the team will be touring the show later this year to Bestival on the Isle of Wight and then to Europe the following summer. A documentary film is being made of the project to encourage public interest in this type of practice-led research. In addition to the Beyond Text project, a team of PCI students also travelled to Kendal Calling under the umbrella of Dr O'Grady's performance company **...floorSpace...** This company have been touring clubs and festivals since 2006 working closely with Dr O'Grady on the practice-based element of her PhD thesis. This has since developed into a cascaded learning project where recent PCI graduates mentor current students and cascade the knowledge they have gained through involvement with **...floorSpace...** so that the work can continue and grow accordingly. Dr O'Grady said, "I was so proud of **...floorSpace...** this year. They took three different shows that all went down a storm. Levels of professionalism were extremely high and I knew the work was in good hands." **Image by Caroline Bonser**



## COLLABORATION BETWEEN PCI AND SPANISH

Dr. Javier Stanziola, Lecturer in Management and Cultural Industries at the School of Performance and Cultural Industries, was asked to produce a work-in-progress of one of his plays, *Hablemos de lo que no hemos vivido* (Let's talk about what we have not lived), as part of the Spanish Language Day at the Instituto Cervantes in London. The play deals with issues of domestic and criminal violence in the context of post-dictatorship Panama. Javier teamed up with a group of five students from the Department of Spanish at the University of Leeds to produce this work. First year students, Miranda Lickert and Patrick Harvey, played the lead roles. Fourth year students, Jessica Hinds-Mingo, Edward Elgood and David Cox, played supporting roles. Students rehearsed from April to May, exploring in particular the recent history of Panama and its implications for the characters they played.

Some of the actors explored in full the peculiarities of the Panamanian accent and its impact on the structure of the play. The work took place on 19th June 2010. It asked the audience to interact with the actors and help build part of the scenography of the show. This project was supported by the Panamanian Embassy in London, the University of Leeds and the Instituto Cervantes. Javier has now been asked to adapt this text for a radio play to be broadcast by a London-based Hispanic radio station later this Autumn.

Nota en la Prensa de Panama:  
<http://www.prensa.com/hoy/especial/2210727.asp>  
Image by Ramón Abadi

## GET INVOLVED...

Focus welcomes new and returning students to the School of Performance and Cultural Industries. Did you know that we always looking for student contributors for the School's newsletter.

- \* **Reviewing StageOne performances**
- \* **Articles about extra Curricular Activities you have been involved in**
- \* **News about any awards or prizes you have received**

Articles should be 150 - 300 words and include an image if at all possible.

Send your news to  
[e.chadwick@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:e.chadwick@leeds.ac.uk)



# stage@leeds

## OCTOBER

### Graft (an actors tale)

George Dillon's Vital Theatre  
Mon 4 Oct

### Methods & Madness

Gary Clarke & The Choreo-Lab Series  
in association with Yorkshire Dance  
Tue 5 Oct

### Pool (No Water)

PunchMeJudy Theatre  
by Mark Ravenhill  
Wed 13 - Fri 15 Oct

### Macbeth

LUU Theatre Group  
by William Shakespeare  
Wed 20 - Sat 23 Oct

### Colour of Nonsense

Forkbeard Fantasy  
Thur 28 Oct

### Rupert Brooke

Useful Donkey Theatre Company  
Tue 26 Oct

## NOVEMBER

### Hayfever

Dugout Theatre Company  
Hay Fever  
by Noel Coward  
Wed 3 - Sat 6 Nov

### The Suicide

by Nikolai Erdman  
Wed 10 - Sat 13 Nov

### Little Polly Puppet

LUU Theatre Group  
Wed 17 - Sat 20 Nov  
Beady Eye Productions

### A Short Show About Nothing

PCI Production  
Wed 24 - Sat 27 Nov

## DECEMBER

### Love Play

LUU Theatre Group  
by Moira Buffini  
Wed 1 - Sat 4 Dec

### King Lear

PCI Production  
by William Shakespeare  
Wed 8 - Sat 11 Dec

## Student Discount

Did you know that all NUS card holders receive the Concessionary price on all stage@leeds performances. You can purchase your tickets anytime from Monday - Friday between 11-3pm at the Box Office



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS