Performance Studies international comes to Leeds this summer.
Dr George Rodosthenous, Lecturer in Music Theatre at the School of Performance and Cultural Industries (PCI), received the Best Direction Award for BODY FADED BLUE. Rodosthenous directed the new musical during a two-month consultancy residency at the Cyprus National Theatre. The theatrical awards covered over 140 productions that were performed across Cyprus between 2009-2011 and were hosted by the Theatrical Organisation of Cyprus (THOC). The award ceremony, on Monday 16th January 2012 in Nicosia was broadcast live on CYBC and attended by the President of the Cyprus Republic.

The creative team of BODY FADED BLUE included 3 University of Leeds alumni. It was written by Stergios Mavrikis - PhD candidate at the Institute of Communication Studies/journalist; composed by Demetris Zavros [PhD in Music Theatre, School of PCI] and choreographed by Lucy Loader BA(Hons) in Theatre and Performance, School of PCI. The production was designed by Leeds-based theatre designer Barney George and lit by George Lazoglou.

The five-member committee felt that ‘Rodosthenous approached the musical theatre BODY FADED BLUE with sensitivity and inventiveness ... [which] highlighted the emotional labyrinth of its protagonist... He unfolded the love triangle and all the characters revolving around it with skill and a robust control of the all of the compositional elements of the production. The musical’s strict structure did not prevent it from having moments of freshness, spontaneity and fun. The director created, with humour and drama, a balanced spectacle which moved effortlessly from the serious to the comic and from laughter to reflection.’

In 2005, Rodosthenous won the Best Composition Award 2003-2005 for his music for IRON (directed by Varnavas Kyriazis).

Performance Studies International

The annual Performance Studies International (PSI) conference is one of the largest gathering of academics and practitioners in the fields of theatre and performance in the world. We are extremely pleased that the University of Leeds has been selected to host this conference in 2012. Professor Mick Wallis and Dr Joslin McKinney from PCI are the conference directors and they have shaped a conference theme, performance :: culture :: industry, around the interests and disciplinary intersections in the School. Some of the questions the conference will address are:

- What are the problematics of both defining and measuring cultural and economic efficacies of performance practice?
- What effects is the change in the global economic landscape having on performance studies?
- What are the present and future possibilities for performance practice and understanding across cultures?
- What are the relationships between and within the academic and industrial spheres in the training of professionals?
- How has, does and might performance engage with concerns around environmental change and ecological impact?

The conference runs from 27th June to 1st July and will consist of over 250 separate events with up and coming scholars and practitioners and established experts presenting, debating, showing and performing their work in response to the conference themes. We are looking for student volunteers who want to be involved in this prestigious event and who would like to assist with the organisation of the conference and support delegates in making their presentations. This will be an excellent opportunity to be involved in a cutting-edge international conference. In return for your work, you will have access to the conference proceedings for free and be able to see and hear new ideas in theatre and performance from world-leading scholars.

You can find out more about the conference our website: www.psi18.org

Front page : Light Night Leeds, Students performing in the Victoria Quarter. Image top from third year performance project The Mnemonist
UNDISCOVERED: LEEDS 
ENTERPRISE 2011-2012 
For our third year Enterprise Project module, Hayley Marchant and I created a new talent search in Leeds to showcase the many creative students looking for an opportunity to demonstrate their talent whilst still studying. We teamed up with a local record label, Big On Road Records, which agreed to offer the winner of our competition a single record contract deal. We held auditions in January and, from 40 acts, chose eight to perform in the talent show final of ‘Undiscovered: Leeds’ on the 10th of March 2012 at Walkabout. Among these finalists, there was a range of musical talent varying from an eleven-piece jazz band with an RnB vocalist to a simple acoustic set, one guy with a guitar. Each act performed two songs on the night in front of a panel of judges and an audience. During our project, we networked with a range of societies and companies, with LSR FM helping to judge the auditions, as well as broadcast on the day of the show. We involved Leeds RAG and their chosen charity, the Ben Manning Music Foundation. People attending the final competition included representatives from local and national music-based organizations, as well as a scout from Universal representing Island Records who was keen to check out the talent. HerCampus Leeds, Jimmy’s Iced Coffee, Bliss Beauty, Ego Hair and Pixel City Promotions were among the other companies involved. Most importantly, the record label that was the catalyst for the project, Big On Road Records, was thrilled by the standard of talent on the night. We can proudly introduce our winner, Deco Honey, who are professional, dedicated, and extremely talented. Overall the night was a success, with over 200 tickets sold, and 50 people working and involved in the final show. We plan to work in the music industry, and already Hayley has secured a job with Warner Records based on our success with Undiscovered: Leeds. We’re really pleased that Undiscovered: Leeds will continue in next year’s Enterprise Project when three students take over the planning and organisation of this search for student talent. Watch out for it!

Alice Willmott 3rd Year BA Hons Managing Performance Image by: Talia Welka

FESTIVAL MAKES IMPACT

Impact Yorkshire is a Documentary film festival taking place this summer at the prestigious Hyde Park Picture House in central Leeds. The festival is about inspiring film makers between the ages of 18-25 to create documentaries about something that they feel has impacted on their life or the lives of others. The organisers behind this event are students Ryan Curtis (University of Leeds) and Thom Burgess (Leeds Met), who have the most talent and need the most help in getting their work out there. What I find really amazing about this project is that it was so unexpected. I am co-running what has become a more and more ambitious project over time. It may all sound a bit daunting at first but it’s really surprising how many people out there are willing to help you out when you come to them with a basic but ambitious idea. Realising how simple it was to just put myself into a work space that would give me these opportunities has made me think that I should have definitely done this in first year. It’s easy to forget that even though you’re in education you can still go out and start doing things for yourself whether it’s going to be assessed or not. Thom, who I am running the project with, as a first year is doing just that and is already getting to know the right people in the right places which in this current climate is extremely important. On the whole I have loved doing the project and collaborating with Thom has been great. If all goes well we hope to carry on Impact Yorkshire as an annual event.”

Ryan Curtis 2nd Year BA (Hons) Managing Performance

Image top: Ryan Curtis (University of Leeds), Rebecca Legg project manager of ‘Somewhere to’ & Thom Burgess (Leeds Metropolitan University)
With 13 events over 7 days, Leeds audiences will be able to experience some of the most exciting artistic work available today right on their doorstep.

The programme includes *Lo Monstre*, an enchanting animatronic creature which will be visiting the city centre, whilst at West Yorkshire Playhouse you can become part of the performance in Ontroerend Goed’s *Audience* – which makes its Leeds premiere direct from a sell-out Edinburgh season and European tour.

Internationally acclaimed performance artist, Bobby Baker’s new show Mad Gyms and Kitchens will be at stage@leeds and together with Opera North, stage@leeds is also co-producing *Ganapati*, a contemporary performance which draws on traditional South Asian folk music and movement, by Adishakti from Pondicherry, India.

In the Riley Smith Hall, Different Light company from New Zealand present *Still Lives*, a unique piece of disability theatre which combines live performance with pre-recorded video and sound. The festival has also commissioned a City Walk, where a network of Yorkshire artists will guide audiences to take a fresh and playful look at the streets of Leeds.

Mick Wallis, Professor of Performance and Culture at the University of Leeds, and Co-Director of Ludus Festival Leeds said: “The city of Leeds has a long history of producing and presenting high quality performing arts. This inaugural Ludus Festival, a new venture in contemporary performing arts for the city, celebrates Leeds as an international centre of excellence in theatre and performance. And more importantly, it presents a fresh and dynamic programme for Leeds’ residents and visitors to enjoy. Ultimately Ludus is about taking the opportunity to try something new - for venues, for audiences, for the city. The name ‘Ludus’ refers to play and we have programmed work that will engage audiences in a playful way. We invite everyone to come along and prepare to be surprised, amazed, pleased and provoked.” Rod Dixon, Artistic Director of Red Ladder Theatre Company further added: “It is a huge pleasure to be a part of a festival which also celebrates that international diversity and which encourages Leeds to be playful – let’s play Leeds!”

Ludus Festival Leeds is led by the University of Leeds and is a collaboration between some of the leading arts organisations in the city including: Opera North, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Yorkshire Dance, stage@leeds, The Carriageworks, Red Ladder, Yorkshire International Performing Arts Network, as well as partners Leeds City Council, Leeds University Union.

For more information about the festival visit: www.ludusfestival.org

Ludus Festival Leeds is looking for volunteers to help with chaperoning for international artists, front of house work in University of Leeds’ venues and with evaluating the festival. The Yorkshire International Performing Arts Network is looking for volunteers to perform as part of the City Walk. If you are interested in these opportunities, please email psi18@leeds.ac.uk

Top Image: Approaches to Performance Making Workshop (C) Allege Above image: ‘Audience’

MORE LIFE – THIRD YEAR PERFORMANCE PROJECT

This third year module for PCI students saw a skilled company of dancers, performers, mangers and designers devise a physical theatre piece in response to Tony Kushner’s influential two part play, *Angels In America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes*.

*Angels in America* was Kushner’s first major work and has had cultural influence over the globe since its premiere over 20 years ago. As an epic drama Kushner’s play unfolds over a variety of locations and distances of time, introducing us to numerous characters and themes including identity, religion, politics, death, sexuality, and love. The abundant amount of material that Kushner meticulously interwove into this play presented the first obstacle to be addressed by company; to pinpoint the subject matter that we wished to explore further.

After multiple sessions experimenting with potential material the group were drawn to the notion that Kushner puts forward of the inevitability of death and how it is within human instinct to want and strive for More Life. Through the layering of intricate soundscapes, rhythmic lighting, and the complex layering of physical theatre and dance, the company created an innovative and thought provoking piece confronting a topic that is rarely discussed.

The passion and the motivation of the group made for a positive collaborative process between scenographers, managers and performers, and the close personal ties experienced by each company member to the subject matter became a focal point, allowing the audience to to be led on an original and emotive exploration of a subject matter that is deeply personal to us all.

Kelly Preece
Image: More Life by George Bacoust