



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

FOCUS

April 2007

News from the School of Performance and Cultural Industries

New Degrees, New Home

A photograph of a person in a blue and purple costume, possibly a dancer or performer, in a dark setting. The person is wearing a blue and purple costume with a large, fringed collar. The lighting is dramatic, with blue and purple hues. The person's hands are visible, and they appear to be in a dynamic pose.



The braided strands of the School of Performance and Cultural Industries are well represented in this edition of Focus. Research supports teaching and leads to more research; a vision to have an internationalist ethos supports student exchanges from Italy to Australia, staff and student participation in international conferences and festivals, and strategic planning advice being given to cities across continents; the interaction of performance and cultural industries leads to an exceptional production of Shakespeare's *Midsummer Nights Dream*, to robotic research, and to collaborative PhDs with Opera North and the National Coal Mining Museum.

A new venture, Masterworks, brings together all MA and PhD students in a critical celebration of what postgraduate study in the School of PCI can provide: we hope this will be the first of many such events.

The final year for PCI on the Bretton Hall Campus has been as exciting and successful as all those preceding it and much of this is due to the unstinting and pro active work of the staff outside the School – Catering, Conferencing, Estates, Library, Residency and Student Services. Many thanks to everyone in these departments for their support and goodwill.

SUSAN DANIELS
HEAD OF SCHOOL

NEW POSTGRADUATE DEGREES

Our rapidly growing postgraduate programme has received a boost with the launch of two new MA degrees in 2006/7. The exciting and unique programme in Culture, Creativity and Entrepreneurship – led by cultural policy specialist Professor Justin O'Connor – focuses on the role of culture and creativity in contemporary society. The degree goes beyond traditional arts and event management courses to focus on the relationship between cultural policy and the creative industries in local, national and international contexts, with a special emphasis on the role of the arts in regeneration and development.

Also starting up this year is the programme in Writing for Performance and Publication, led by lecturer, playwright, screenwriter and producer Garry Lyons. Designed for students who hope to become professional writers, or who wish to develop their writing skills, the degree is particularly aimed at those with an interest in scriptwriting for theatre, film and television or radio, and who additionally wish to work in other genres such as prose.

Together with our fast evolving MA in Performance Studies, led by Professor Jonathan Pitches, the new degrees offer an exciting range of postgraduate opportunities at the cutting edge of contemporary performance and cultural practice. An innovative feature is the amount of collaboration between the different MA groups, allowing students from all three disciplines to work together on both theoretical and practical projects, including the mounting of a postgraduate festival – Masterworks – this coming May.

MASTERWORKS

Masterworks will be a three day festival-conference of postgraduate work; from research papers and play readings to performance, this festival will celebrate and explore the place of postgraduate work within the faculty and within wider national and international frameworks. Keynote openings include internationally renowned playwright David Edgar (*Entertaining Strangers*, *Maydays*, *Albert Speer*) and theatre academic and writer Dr. Nicholas Ridout (Queen Mary, University of London: *Contemporary Theatres in Europe*, (ed.) 2006; *Stage Fright*, *Animals*, and *Other Theatrical Problems*, 2006). In addition there will be a day long workshop with theatre artists Chris Crickmay and Miranda Tufnell (authors of *Body Space Image*). The programme is still being finalised and will be published shortly, but with the list of contributors growing daily it promises to be a wonderful three days of debate, entertainment and networking.

For anyone who is thinking about postgraduate study or entering the challenges of work in the cultural industries



HONORARY RESEARCH FELLOW RUTH DASS

The School is delighted to welcome Ruth as an Honorary Research Fellow.

Ruth established InterCulture in 2000, a unique agency created to support innovative, enterprising solutions designed to break down cultural barriers in the Yorkshire region. InterCulture has provided a cutting edge approach to issues of race and diversity through its programming working with a host of regional, national and international creative partnerships.

She began her career as an Archaeologist with the York Archaeological Trust, and became Operational Manager of the ARC, the first hands on Museum of Archaeology in Europe when it opened in 1990. Ruth has served as a Magistrate for York for 10 years and is a Specialist Member for Race for The Employment Tribunals Leeds and is a trustee for the Duke of York's Community Initiative.

InterCulture will be based at Holy Trinity Church from April 2007 as part of the development of Vision 2007 Sites of Memory, to commemorate the Bi-Centenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade. In February 2007 Ruth was awarded a Millennium award for her project Connecting Enterprising Women.

this event is a must! The festival will run 17-19 May 2007. For more information please contact either of the curators, Patrick Duggan (pcupjd@leeds.ac.uk) or Professor Jonathan Pitches (j.pitches@leeds.ac.uk)

NATIONAL COAL MINING MUSEUM ENGLAND SCHOOLS FESTIVAL

Year 3 BA Arts Education students and tutor, Dr Martin Crick spent the first semester working on a living history project with the NCMME and six local schools. This culminated in a day of public performances at the museum, opened by local MP, Ed Balls, who commented 'It's really important that we continue to support the development of drama in the local community'.

COLLABORATIVE PhDs

The School has been awarded funding by the Arts Humanities Research Council for three collaborative PhDs. Two are with the Opera North and one with the National Coal Mining Museum England.

DIGITAL DREAMING

Live actors and animated sprites, digital technology and projected scenery were combined to create a magical world of the fairies in a spectacular new production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the University of Leeds in March 2007.

Shakespeare's timeless masterpiece was given a contemporary twist through the work of academics and students. Using projected scenery, the digital animations were seen to interact directly with the performers and appear as live participants in the world of the play. Our interpretation stemmed from the idea of the rave as a place of escape – a world to which the lovers run away in order to evade the restrictions and authority of their society. Virtual fairies combined with echoes of the corporate world of *The Apprentice* and the use of popular dance music to create a heady, eclectic theatrical mix.

Directors Scott Palmer and Dr Sita Popat have been working in the field of performance and technology over the last three years in collaboration with digital media artists KMA. It is the first time that this experimental research has been showcased to a public theatre audience. Previous work has included research and development for Phoenix Dance Theatre's *Eng-er-land* (2005) and the *Dancing in the Streets* interactive kinetic light installation commissioned for the York Renaissance Project (March-July 2005).

This particular production represented the last third year undergraduate performance to be staged at the Bretton Hall Campus. The choice of play echoed the Shakespeare Festival performances once staged annually on this site and looked to the future through the use of a model that links undergraduate teaching to both research and knowledge transfer activities. A special preview performance was staged for an invited audience including graduates from the School, a Pro-Vice Chancellor from the University, researchers from the Universities of Manchester, Lancaster, Nottingham and Bedfordshire, and Lloyd Newson from DV8 Physical Theatre Company.

Collaboration with KMA continues through the AHRC-funded *Projecting Performance* project, which concludes in January 2008. More information is available at:

<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/paci/projectingperformance/home.html>

A Midsummer Night's Dream was made possible through funding from the University of Leeds Faculty of Performance, Visual Arts & Communications, NESTA (National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts) and AHRC (Arts & Humanities Research Council).

SPIDERCRAW: DEVELOPING ROBOTIC AGENTS THROUGH PLAY

As part of the Cultures of Performance level one module, first year students were introduced to a leading-edge research project which is being conducted by Professor Mick Wallis and Dr Sita Popat with commercial robot engineers, Shadow Robot Company Ltd, and Professor in Artificial Intelligence in the School of Computing at the University of Leeds, David Hogg. Students learnt how play and games, which are commonly used as methods in performance rehearsal and in devising new work, are now being used in the designing of technological objects which are capable of interacting with humans.

The research team is developing SpiderCrab, a 6-limbed 2m high multi-sensorial robot, which will be a cross between a dance partner and a performance environment. It will have pseudo-human characteristics such as precoil and recoil gestures, aesthetic choice, redundant movement, mood and physical temperament. Most importantly, the development team want SpiderCrab to be able to respond to and interact with humans in a creative and expressive way. Using theories of play in design workshops is helping them to do this.

PCI students have been invited to get involved with the research and design workshops. Dance students studied the movement of a prototype SpiderCrab limb to imagine what kind of interactions between robot and dancer might be possible. By embodying the robots' movement and playing with the idea of duets between robots and dancers, students helped the robot engineers to imagine development possibilities. Theatre and Performance and Performance Design students have contributed to the project by observing and documenting the workshops. Involving undergraduate students in research helps them to develop an appreciation of the research process, which will be valuable for them in their own work.

The SpiderCrab project is part of a major research project, Emergent Objects, which is based in the School of Performance and Cultural Industries. You can read more about the project on the website:
<http://www.emergentobjects.co.uk/>



PALATINE CONFERENCE

This was held at Sheffield University on 15 March to explore pedagogic and academic practices in the field of Intermediality. Lecturer Dr Kara McKechnie jointly organised the conference with Freda Chapple (University of Sheffield) and Professor Robin Nelson (Manchester Metropolitan University). They are supported by the International Federation of Theatre Research, of which the School has recently become an institutional member. Further information can be found on the Palatine website.

www.palatine.ac.uk

NEW DIRECTIONS

The University of Leeds cross-faculty Popular Culture Research Group is hosting a one-day conference on 'New Directions in Popular Culture: Discourse and Pleasure'. Dr Kara McKechnie will be presenting a paper on German television drama as part of the event.

CREATIVE CHINA!

In October 2006 the school co-hosted a conference in China on Creative Economies, Creative Cities at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. A book based on the conference, co-edited by Professor Justin O'Connor (PCI) and Professor Lily Kong of the National University of Singapore, is now in preparation and should be published early 2008. Professor Jonathan Pitches' 2007 book *Vsevolod Meyerhold* is to be translated into Chinese.

In April and June Justin has been invited to the Westminster Hearings on China's economic development, organised by the All Party Parliamentary China Group.

On 30 May the cultural industries research group in PCI has organised an international speaker, Dr Michael Keane, to come and speak on Creative China in advance of the publication of his book on this subject. In the meantime the research group is preparing a research network bid with a group of universities in the UK and China.

Advisory work on the role of culture in cities

Professor Justin O'Connor (PCI), Dr Calvin Taylor (PCI) and Dr David Bell (School of Geography) are undertaking consultancy on the role of culture in cities for the Yorkshire Key Cities Group. They are working with the chief executives and heads of cultural services in each of the cities to identify the main challenges for cities and culture in the coming decade and how cultural resources can be used for the benefit of those cities and their people. The report is due at the end of March, and will include suggestions for a more vital role for cultural considerations in policy making for economic development, tourism, transport and education.

COMMERCIAL COSTUME

A recent costume commission for a head louse to be featured in an advert for shampoo lent itself to an interesting workshop for one of the Access Academy's HE Experience days. The brief involved Mike Stringer of highly successful prosthetics company Hybrid Enterprises based in Armley and PCI lecturer Monique Hollinshead constructing the costume. The same brief was then presented to a group of students from 3 High Schools who were visiting the campus. They had 40 minutes to consider the casting of such a character, how the texture, shape and qualities of the insect could be introduced into the costume. After a lot of scratching of heads the results showed an imaginative use of fabric and images to communicate their ideas for the design. The taster sessions, organised by the Access Academy, are designed to show different ways in which undergraduates work and the opportunities for future careers in subjects studied at University.

(RE)ACTOR 2: THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON DIGITAL LIVE ART

After the success of last year's event at Queen Mary's University London, lecturer Alice Bayliss will be co-chairing (re)Actor 2 along with research collaborators Jennifer Sheridan (BigDog Interactive) and Rebekka Kill (Leeds Metropolitan University). The theme of this year's conference is Bad Girls, Gadgets and Guerrilla Performance and will focus on women who are practising in and between the fields of Computing, Performance and Live Art.

The conference will take place at the newly refurbished Old Broadcasting House in Leeds and will consist of formal academic papers, interactive installations, commissioned art works and a touring exhibition on the history of Live Art. The key note speech will be given by the Guerilla Girls (www.guerillagirls.com), New York artists who travel the world talking about the issues and their experiences as feminist performers.

Furthering the School's development of research into club culture and interactive performance, delegates will be invited to attend and participate in a major club event hosted for the first time ever in Leeds by Lost Vagueness (www.lostvagueness.com). Expect Burlesque festival glitz-sleaze and exhilarating performance as well as DJs, VJs and bands. Current students who have been working closely with Alice on various practice-led research projects will be performing their latest walkabout show with her company ...floorspace...

Any current students who would like to be involved in the conference should contact Alice at a.bayliss@leeds.ac.uk. Tickets will be available for both the conference and the club night through the website www.digitalliveart.co.uk in the near future.



SONG, STAGE AND SCREEN II

Dr George Rodosthenous and Mr Arthur Pritchard organized the international conference Song, Stage and Screen II which was attended by over 50 delegates. The conference opened with a keynote by Dr Nicholas Till and speakers included Opera North's Jim Holmes (Head of Music) and Dominic Gray (Projects Director).

There were also two commissioned performances *Clastoclysm* (dir. Demetris Zavros) and *The Symposium* (dir. Dr George Rodosthenous) and a guest performance *Beg, Borrow and Steal* by Steven Sparling. One of the delegates, Dr Dominic Symonds said that he "was really very impressed with the event... The mixture of academic papers and practical work was very stimulating".

CONTRACT WITH OPERA NORTH AGREED

In November 2006, the University of Leeds and Opera North entered a formal contracted collaborative venture with four objectives:

- to be a leader in the creative and intellectual life of the city, with an impact felt regionally, nationally and internationally;
- to produce programmes, events and publications that are beyond the reach of either partner acting alone;
- to build connections between the classical and contemporary arts, and between the arts and contemporary society;
- to engage new participants in creativity and academic achievement.

This programme will have two distinct but overlapping faces, one public, and the other in-house. These are unified by three core themes – *knowledge, skill and performance*. Each strand represents a facet of the collaboration and interacts with the others to generate a unique creative and intellectual force. Activities will range from community projects to focused research. The programme is conceived as developing initially over four years, with the partnership established as a leader in the field by 2010. The School is already closely engaged with the project. Two PhDs funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, will be jointly supervised by PCI lecturers and Opera North. A commissioned outreach project will be undertaken by second year students on the Collaborative Performance module. Students will be able to attend rehearsals, and have the opportunity to apply for placements and internships.

Look at the website: <http://www.dareyou.org.uk>

TRAVEL BROADENS THE MIND!

If you are a first year student thinking ahead to next year's options and activities why not think about going abroad? You get to leave Leeds for a year and study in a completely different country, meeting completely different people and spending your grant in completely different places. Plus you get the word *International* in your degree title! There are two schemes. The first covers Europe and is organised on a school basis – PCI is currently in the development stage with these links (see next issue!) so you would have to discuss any requests with the International Office. This year a student was offered a place in Milan, so it is possible. The second scheme involves world wide links, and here you can apply to any of the places on the University's list. This year we are sending students to Brisbane and Toronto; where do you want to go?

The International Office has a really useful website which tells you all you need to know, and their door is always open. If you are thinking about applying, the deadline will be around early December 2007, so you've plenty of time to think about it. Why not drop me a line?

Professor Justin O'Connor, International Officer

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<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/international/>

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIVE PROJECT & THE PRAGUE QUADRENNIAL 2007

Students on the BA (Hons) Performance Design are currently working on NE(s)T, a web-based collaborative project that enables scenographic ideas for performance to be shared by students across international and cultural boundaries. Initiated by lecturers Joslin McKinney and Scott Palmer and hosted by the School, the project also involves staff and student participants from Massey University, New Zealand, Theatre Academy, Finland and Carnegie Mellon University, USA.

Since November 2006 staff and students have been collaborating through this website to share, discuss and develop ideas about designing for performance. The students involved have interests in lighting design, costume design, sound design and scenic design and the way these elements interact with bodies, and objects, through space and time to create performance.

Aristophanes' play *The Birds* has been selected as the starting point for this international collaboration. It contains some interesting challenges for designers including an exotic cast of speaking birds, the creation of 'cloud-cuckoo land' and the arrival of Iris, the goddess of the rainbow. The students are working together to create a design-based performance which will be realised when all the participants meet face-to-face in Prague in June.

Every four years the city hosts the Prague Quadrennial, the world's largest scenographic exhibition. Professional theatre designers and students from all over the world gather to take part in the exhibition and the extensive programme of events that runs alongside it. Increasingly, designers in the UK are finding that their work leads them to collaborate internationally and we hope that this project will help us understand better how web-based resources can best facilitate creative collaboration and development. As well as sharing creative ideas, the students and the staff involved will be able to gain understanding of approaches to the teaching and practice of scenography in different cultural contexts and further develop links with departments of theatre and performance design internationally. As part of the Prague Quadrennial exhibition, students from Leeds will also be participating in the interactive British National Exhibit which will represent higher education theatre design courses from across the UK.



GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS

NORTHERN BALLET

A recent production of Sleeping Beauty tale, which premiered at Leeds Grand Theatre on Saturday 24 February, was notable for the number of PCI graduates working on it. The costumes of the evolved beings were made by Nadine Davies (BA (Hons) PDP 2006). Lecturer Monique Hollinshead was ably assisted by Karen Stansfield (BA (Hons) TDT 2003) in the realising of the blue wizards, the five mutated trees and the spider's legs. Costume Technician Sally Baxendale made the principal's headresses. Alexa Penny (BA (Hons) Arts Management 2005) is currently in the stage management department. Katy Stephenson (BA (Hons) TDT 2003) and Katie Grady (current 2nd year BA (Hons) Performance Design) helped cover production week in the costume department.

CANVAS DANCE COMPANY

Canvas Dance Company, founded by Anthony Briggs and Sarah Shead (BA (Hons) Dance 2005) have been selected to work with the prestigious Halifax based performance company I.O.U theatre. The company have been awarded a place on I.O.U's 'Space, Time, Tools and Advice' professional development programme. The programme will enable Canvas Dance Company to work with the company over a three month period and develop performance ideas and new material.

For further information visit the company website

www.canvasdance.co.uk

PETER CULLIS (MA Creative Writing 2002) has had his first novel *Instruments of War*, published by Exposure, part of Meadow Books. The book is set in Cyprus in 1947, and tells the story of a Greek Cypriot boy and his British friend.

BEN COULING (BA (Hons) TDT 2002) now works for Royal Caribbean International cruise line out of Miami as a lighting designer/technician. He is part of the new build team which goes to the ship yard in Finland to setup and install shows.

DAVID LOWNDES (BA (Hons) TDT 2003) works in the Production Dept. at White Light in London as a project manager.

KAREN BARTHOLOMEW (BA (Hons) Dance) has been employed by Retina dance company as a documentary film maker for their recent 'Page 1' dance in education project. www.retinadance.com

LUCY WESTON (BA (Hons) TDT 2004) has worked recently with Paragon and two months on ITV's adaptation of *Mansfield Park*.

ROZ MARSHALL (BA (Hons) TDT 2005) has been busy working mostly in Bristol filming, for the past 5 months, on the latest E4 series *Skins*. She's also just been offered a job as Costume Assistant in London.

KATY MOORE (MA Creative Writing 2006) has been offered an internship on the smash hit American sitcom, *Scrubs*, at the personal invitation of the show's creator, Bill Lawrence.

BEN INGLES (BA(Hons) Acting 2004) Ben has just completed playing Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet*, which was directed by Mike Fentiman – (BA (Hons) Acting 2004).

EDDIE JONES (BA (Hons) Acting 2006) is currently working with ImpAct Theatre Company and has recently completed tours of *NHS and You*, and *Work Experience – An Action Adventure*, across the East coast.

CURRENT STUDENT NEWS

CHOREOGRAPHY FESTIVAL

The year three BA (Hons) Dance Choreography Festival will take place on the 24 and 25 of May 2007. Final year students will be showcasing their choreographic work in what promises to be an exciting and varied programme. For booking information contact the Performance Centre box office – 0113 343 9246.

JESSICA SIMPSON

Jessica Simpson, a year two BA (Hons) Performance Design student has been extending her skills in millinery in her spare time and recently assisted Sally Baxendale as milliner on *The Cherry Orchard* at the Crucible Theatre Sheffield. Jess made Varya's hat.

THE GOOD PERSON OF SZECHWAN

This project is a continuation of the success that was last year's *Merchant Of Venice*, one of the very few entirely student run productions including an education tour and pack for schools. The production has received sponsorship from Higher Education Innovation Fund and Connexions West Yorkshire. The directors of the play are Laura Mackay and Jack Meredith.

INDIVIDUALISM EXHIBITION

Tim Griffiths, current third year BA (Hons) Arts Manager is co-ordinating an art exhibition as part of the Bretton Hall 1947-2007 weekend. Tim has been granted £1000 from the Faculty Widening Participation Fund, enabling him to work with academic colleagues in running workshops for local schools.

RELOCATION

PERFORMANCE AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

STAGE@LEEDS

These are the words soon to be seen written on the new theatre complex, currently under construction on the Leeds Campus. Whilst the area surrounding the new build is still very much like a building site, the interior is taking shape. After much debate the colour has now been chosen for the decoration and seating for 'Stage 1', the new 180 seat theatre. The studio is to be named **The Alec Clegg Studio**, which will provide a venue for educational and research development.

Estate services have continued to work closely with School staff, and in particular Scott Palmer and Robin Watkinson, to determine the equipment and furnishing specifications of both the new building and of facilities in Man Made Fibres and Wool Division buildings. The CETL (Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning of Enterprise) room, which will be shared by students on the Performance Management course, has now been completed and furnished. Work has already commenced in other rooms within Man Made Fibres and the Performance Design workshop should be completed soon after Easter.

The majority of staff will relocate at the beginning of August with costume and props following in early September. Much of the art work formerly displayed on the Bretton Hall Campus will be re-hung within the new building and other areas within the Faculty.



RELOCATION PROGRAMME

The relocation programme is on schedule and familiarisation tours of the Leeds Campus and the School facilities will be ongoing during the Summer term. Leeds University Union will be producing a guide for all students relocating to Leeds and for the new students joining the School in September. In addition to this, staff will receive a pack about the services/support provided on the Leeds Campus. The School will be producing a 2007/08 Diary with important information and telephone contacts.

PRODUCTION MANAGER APPOINTED

Robin Watkinson has been appointed as Production Manager for **Stage@Leeds** and will be supported by an assistant post (currently being advertised). Robin looks forward to working with staff from across the University in putting together an exciting and innovative theatre programme for the coming season.



BRETTON HALL 1947-2007

As part of the relocation programme staff and students have been working hard to develop a weekend of events to mark the importance that Bretton Hall has held for many over the past six decades. Current third years have been co-ordinating the entertainment programme;

- Anna Lavery – 1947 – 2007 Event
- Tim Griffiths – Individualism Exhibition
- John Davison – 1947 – 2007 Fringe
- Helen Rolfe – 32 Mystery Plays To Do Before You Die

The adaptation of 32 Mystery Plays has received funding from the Higher Education Innovation Fund. Two of the expected highlights of the weekend will be the Bretton Brit and BAFTA Night and two lecturers performing their last 'swan song' as part of the Fringe (Mike Casey and Arthur Pritchard).



School of Performance and Cultural Industries

FACULTY OF PERFORMANCE, VISUAL ARTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

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