Tutor awarded Doctorate
Alice O'Grady, lecturer in applied performance and intervention, has recently been awarded her doctorate and will graduate in July 2010. Her PhD thesis is entitled ‘Underground Club Spaces and Interactive Performance’. For the past 7 years Alice has been observing, researching and analysing the types of performances that occur within the space of the underground with particular reference to Techno and Psy Trance clubs – scenes that stem from the rave movement of the late 1980s. Her work positions these club spaces as ‘playful arenas’ and she has developed a theorisation about clubbing as a performative activity in its own right. Although the PhD is a written document, her research has incorporated a body of practice with her performance company ‘FloorSpace’. This company has been in existence since 2006 touring festivals and clubs. It is made up of undergraduate students from the School who have shown particular interest in Alice’s research. From this practice has come a modelling of performance structures that occur in flexible spaces of conviviality where the outcome is negotiated with audience members who slide from being observers to participant-performers. Alice is continuing this work with the Beyond Text research awards ‘Festival Performance as a State of Encounter’ and ‘Environments for Encounter’.

Essential Reading
Dr. Joslin McKinney's new volume The Cambridge Introduction to Scenography (with Dr Philip Butterworth) has instantly become essential reading to undergraduates of the Performance Design course, but its appeal will be to all scholars of performance. This ground-breaking book analyses Scenography – the creation, manipulation and orchestration of the performance environment which is an increasingly popular and key area in contemporary performance studies. The book introduces readers to the purpose, identity and scope of scenography and its theories and concepts. Settings and structures, light, projected images, sound, costumes and props are considered in the relation to performing bodies, text, space and the role of the audience.

Three major research-led teaching projects for the School
Launched in March and edited by Professor Jonathan Pitches, Theatre Dance and Performance Training is a major new addition to the world of performance journals. The Journal is already required reading for the year two module, Performer Training, and includes articles from the UK, US, Australia, Japan and Holland. The first issue is available as a free online download.

Also on the list of essential texts will be a new book, Performance Perspectives, edited by Dr. Sita Popat and Professor Jonathan Pitches. Based on the first year common module, we hope this international publication (published by Palgrave) will help spread the body-space-time-technology-interactivity-organisation message all over the UK and the US.

Finally, we are celebrating a major Academic Development Fund award to the School by the University focusing on ‘digital reflection’. With the title ‘Digitalis’, the project brings together teachers and students from at least three schools in the Faculty and is managed by Professor Jonathan Pitches.

Susan Daniels

Although it is the end of the undergraduate term and this is the last newsletter of academic year 2009-10, activities at PCI/stage@leeds and by PCI students don’t cease. Rebecca Newman was awarded (against stiff competition) one of the University undergraduate research scholarships and will spend the summer working with Dr Phil Kiszely & the publishing firm ‘Intellect’ organising the first volume of the new Journal of ‘Punk and Post Punk’. Three groups of students crossing both PCI degrees and other University Schools will be in Edinburgh performing at the fringe festival in August and a tutor and two students will be presenting scenes from a final year performance project at the International Festival of Ancient Greek Drama in Cyprus. Staff from PCI and stage@leeds will be working on the University international summer school. Emerge, a city wide performance festival, will again have stage@leeds as one of its three venues.

This newsletter is also the last one for which I shall write as a Head of School. After seven great years, I reach the end of my term of office and from the 1st August the Head of School will be Dr Sita Popat, Senior Lecturer in Dance (New Technologies). I shall be taking on a new role, as the PVAC Faculty International Director, though I shall still be very much a member of PCI and look forward to working with current and new members of the School.

Scott Palmer
Cultural Olympiad 2012
Wing Beats, an exciting music-theatre project, has become only the third artist initiated project to be selected by imove, Legacy's Trust's UK programme, to be part of Yorkshire's contribution to the Cultural Olympiad 2012. This is a collaboration between lead artist, lecturer Adam Strickson, the University of Leeds, East Riding of Yorkshire Council and Bridlington Renaissance. The themes are aviation, Amy Johnson, the seabirds of Bempton Cliffs and 'how we fly on the ground' with two specially commissioned works involving students, professional artists and community participants. This is a £100K project with half of the funds coming from 'imove', who are co-producing the project, and will involve major performances of newly commissioned work in Bridlington and Leeds in 2011 and 2012.

Adam Strickson

Dance Leaders Project Event: April 28th 2010
Dr Victoria Hunter, Programme manager for Dance, led a feedback event in April which celebrated the culmination of a year-long project exploring community dance leadership and professional development in the West Yorkshire region. Funded by the West Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network and delivered in collaboration with Yorkshire Dance the project engaged two dance ‘apprentices’ in a range of work placements, training and mentoring opportunities. One of the apprentices, Karen Bartholomew (pictured), A graduate from the B.A Dance course (2003-2006) discussed how the project had developed her skills and confidence as a freelance community dance artist and increased her network of local contacts. Presentations were also delivered by Linda Jasper, head of Youth Dance England and Maggie Morris from Trinity Laban regarding the newly validated Diploma in Dance Teaching and Learning for Children and Young People to be launched in the region . September 2010.

Vicky Hunter

Dance and Social Inclusion: April 2010
Students from the B.A Dance programme recently participated in a two-day workshop with Dance United, the U.K's leading company working within the field of dance and social inclusion. Led by Pauline Gladstone from the company, the students explored the question: 'What skills do dance artists need when working with challenging groups? 'The workshop explored how the company employ contemporary dance practice when working with young offenders and groups of young people marginalised in society. The students learnt how to manage challenging behaviour and facilitate learning through contemporary dance within this particular community dance context. The workshop was funded by the Higher Education Innovation Fund. For further information on Dance United visit: http://www.dance-united.com/

Vicky Hunter

Irish Night by Garry Lyons
A part-verbatim play with music by Writing for Performance lecturer Garry Lyons was the subject of a talk by Irish Diaspora expert, Patrick O’Sullivan of Bradford University, at the ‘Ireland’s Drama in British Cities’ conference in Manchester during April. Irish Night was first staged on UK tour in 1987/8. O’Sullivan’s talk focused on the processes that went into the making of the play, its audience reception, and its use of Irish song and entertainment forms.

New Multi-Media Performance
David Shearing Research Associate in Scenography, recently worked as video artist and scenographer for extended vocal artist and academic Yvon Bonenfant's restaging of Beacons, which was performed at Central School of Speech and Drama in March this year. This experimental multi screen projection and immersive voice piece was devised during a residency at the recently opened Curtis R. Priem Experimental Media & Performing Arts Center (EMPAC), New York in 2009; this restaging was the first UK showing of the work with the piece now likely to continue touring the UK and Internationally in Autumn 2011.

David Shearing

New Staff

External Relations Assistant
Liz joined the School in October 2009 as the new External Relations Assistant. Graduating with a Contemporary Creative Practice degree in 2006, Liz has worked as an assistant centre manager and Supported Employment Officer for people with Learning Disabilities

Paul Halgarth

Technician
Paul joined us from the West Yorkshire Playhouse in October 2009 as a new Technician. Paul graduated in 2004 with a Performance Design and Production degree and has since worked with leading professional designers and companies.
COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

Building on the success of previous years, the Collaborative Performance Project has another partner in The Stanley & Audrey Burton Gallery. It has also enjoyed wider participation in the community. Module leader Dr Philip Kiszely said: “I’m delighted that this great work will be used in a wider context. All the strands of this module have impacted superbly on the region and beyond.”

The West Yorkshire Fire Service
The West Yorkshire Fire Service/Road Safety TIE strand of the 2nd Year Collaborative Performance Project has been the subject of three press articles over the course of the semester. No less remarkable is the fact that their road safety awareness plays and workshops have been performed to over 500 Year Nine pupils in Leeds and the surrounding areas. Fifty students from all PCI degree programmes have been involved in the project, which has been covered extensively by the Yorkshire Evening Post. The hard-hitting plays, which deal with death by dangerous driving and issues surrounding substance/alcohol abuse in young people, have proved such a success that they have been filmed for an educational DVD. Published by West Yorkshire Fire Service, the DVD will feature in an innovative education pack for schools.

Dr Philip Kiszely

National Coal Mining Museum
In collaboration with the National Coal Mining Museum of England and four schools in and around the Wakefield area (Horbury School, Cathedral School, Freestone Business and Enterprise College and Ossett School), students from the School created a drama festival in order to celebrate the region’s mining history.

In the lead up to the festival PCI students ran workshops for year ten pupils in the partner schools and used specialist events management skills to liaise with the museum and organise the day. The festival itself was a real success. Performances by all partners were given in various spaces in and around the museum site. The PCI showing was a particularly exciting adaptation of Euripides Iphigenia at Aulis, which reframed a historical text to reflect themes surrounding mining and the local community. The confidence of students from the partner school grew throughout the process and it was a fabulous opportunity for the local community to celebrate their rich cultural heritage.

Katie Beswick

The Stanley & Audrey Burton Gallery
MAKE.ART.MOVE.YOU was the first performance project created by second year students from the School of Performance and Cultural Industries working in collaboration with The Stanley & Audrey Burton Gallery. The project team worked closely with the Gallery Curator, Layla Bloom, in order to develop an event for ‘Museums at Night’ a Europe-wide initiative that aims to share museums and galleries in a different light. Set against the seminal works of The Stanley and Audrey Burton Gallery collection and the touring works of Alan Davie, MAKE.ART.MOVE.YOU integrates personal and collective relationships with the art work and the gallery space highlighting ways we as consumers approach visiting art galleries and our individual engagement with the works themselves.

Fiona Bannon

Leeds City Art Gallery
Over the past three years students have worked in collaboration with Leeds Art Gallery. This year students were given the brief to create an intervention in the space which sought to challenge how an audience engages and experiences the gallery environment. The students developed the concept and promoted the event as Itching the Art, which presented three different and unique events all on the same day. Constructing the female form was a beautifully crafted live performance event that sculpted the female form in real time. Using industrial materials to shape and mould a live performer, the piece delicately balanced the literal and metaphorical constructions of the female body.
‘Synes-Scene’ responded to how we experience and interpret sound within the gallery space. The company created an original sound environment which the audience experienced through headphones. The soundscape challenged the viewer’s notion of time and how we engage without various senses in the gallery space. ‘C’est Art, Non?’ was a surreal visual art performance that aimed to break down the barriers carried by the stereotypical art gallery. Audience members were invited to have tea with various members of the fine art elite, and in doing so question the nature of the art gallery, and of course; what is art? This year’s event was a very successful collaboration, and students engaged well with a complicated site producing some original and thought provoking pieces.

David Shearing

**Opera North: Workshops in Primary Schools**

For the fourth year running, student were commissioned to run a series of workshops in three South Leeds Primary Schools: Low Road, Windmill and Castleton. All have previously participated in the project. In preparation, students worked closely with Laura and Hannah from Opera North Education and had the opportunity to visit rehearsals and workshops. They developed material relating to current Opera North production Rusalka. Students were also introduced to running music workshops for Key Stage 2 children by animateur and singer Sally Egan, with favourite songs and exercises emerging, such as ‘Bungalow’, ‘Peas Pudding’ and ‘The Witch Song’. The student groups visited the schools for four workshops each, culminating in showings where the children were able to share songs they had written with the students, as well as some lovely arts and crafts materials relating to the underwater theme of Rusalka. Some great work has taken place to communicate the fun that can be had with opera and all its constituent parts. The children acquired new skills and confidence – it was lovely to see a little girl who hardly spoke at the start of the project stepping up to sing solo at one of the showings!

Kara McKenchie

**New Hall Prison**

This year has seen a continued interest from students who want to work with offenders and those at risk of offending. This particular strand of the Collaborative Performance Project offers Level 2 students the opportunity to facilitate performance work with a range of groups and individuals in a variety of challenging settings where resistance to educational intervention can be high and the emotional impact of delivering such work profound. This year the group split into three separate companies.

The first chose to work with Year 10 pupils at Springfield PRU (Pupil Referral Unit) in Wakefield on a project aimed to raise aspirations through creative activities incorporating music and film as well as drama. The second company chose to create an adaptation of John Godber’s play ‘Teechers’ to explore the broad themes of education, identity and opportunity. The play was adapted specifically for an audience of female prisoners and was performed in the association room of HMP New Hall.

The third company worked very closely with a group of adult female prisoners (again from HMP New Hall) who were currently studying for a Hairdressing qualification whilst serving time behind bars. The students visited the prison five times and conducted workshops around the themes of beauty and perception, addressing the low levels of self-esteem that are often apparent in a prison setting of this kind.

Dr Alice O’Grady

The Collaborative Performance Projects module PECI2102 is performed by second year students who build on their collaborative practices built in level 1 to develop a performance or workshop outcome for a specific content. You can find out more about UG modules on our website [www.leeds.ac.uk/paci](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/paci)

Kara McKenchie
Leeds for Life Awards

Two students from the School of Performance and Cultural Industries have been awarded funding by The Leeds for Life Foundation which helps students to develop their skills, broaden their life experience and benefit others.

With generous funding from the Alumni Annual Fund, the Santander Group and the University’s Expeditions and Travel Bursaries fund, the Foundation supports projects across four themes:

- Personal development and benefitting others
- Development of a better understanding of Spanish-speaking countries
- Travel abroad
- Travel writing

Nathanya Laurent
MANAGING PERFORMANCE
“This is a self-devised activity that began to take shape during my current Enterprise Project module. It will explore how image therapy and the art of clothing can generate wellbeing and self esteem in the community. The project will contribute towards my academic work and also create the foundations of a social enterprise. Committed to making a difference in society, this project aims to evolve into a service that challenges body confidence issues for women from vulnerable groups such as those with mental health issues, obesity issues and those with a terminal illness.”

Rosie Dowen
MANAGING PERFORMANCE
“I will be the sole volunteer from the United Kingdom working with the managerial team of the San Francisco Theater Festival. Primarily I will help support and co-ordinate 75+ local volunteers of all ages in the week leading up to and during the three-day festival itself. I will receive valuable training and insight regarding the management of cultural events in North America. I am keen to support this important charitable event which provides a showcase for up and coming talent as well as an opportunity for the people of San Francisco to engage in the arts for free.”

Student Case Study

Rachel Wood is a BA Performance Design Student who is in her final year of her Degree.

What Achievements are you most proud of?
My final major project, a performance project with managers, dancers and performers so it was really collaborative and we did it to celebrate the anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall; it was great finding out about such a big historical event then working with other creative practitioners. I was so proud of the final result working as a team and it was the closest module I would aspire to be after graduating.

What are the advantages of studying in the school of PCI?
The advantages of being at PCI are being right in the heart of the university. It is such a lively university and we’re a big part of it. It is also a really new facility and it’s developing all the time. Because I have been here right from the beginning I have seen it change and I think that in the future there’s going to be some really exciting developments.

What did you enjoy most about your time as a student in the School of PCI?
Learning a lot about an industry that, although I knew a little about it already I have seen so many different sides to it, both theoretical and vocational and it’s just been really exciting to discover all about it.

Why would you recommend the Performance Design course to prospective students?
Performance design is a really good holistic approach to theatre design, we cover costume, set and lighting, and I think a lot of people come to uni and they don’t really want to specialise straight away. Before I came to uni I had done a lot about costume but didn’t know anything about set and lighting design and now I think set design is something I would really like to do in the future but I had no idea about it when I started. Also working with all three subjects as a whole not as separate industries I have developed as a sceneographer and I didn’t really know that sort of existed before I went to uni. I think it’s about learning a broad knowledge of theatre design.

What skills have you acquired or developed through studying on this course?
The skills I have acquired and developed are working creatively in a collaborative environment; it’s about being experimental in the rehearsal process, I think before I came to uni I was a bit scared of taking risks in design and now I’m much more open to try new things and listen to other people’s ideas as well as exploring my own. Also definitely researching writing academically and understanding theoretical practice along the practical knowledge. I think the course has offered me a wide range of opportunities to explore theatre design in the future, I think doing both theoretical and practical modules means that I can go into performance academically or practically, so that offers me more variety.
Jack, the New LUU Welfare Officer

Jack Cheyette Year three Theatre and Performance student was voted the new Leeds University Union Welfare officer in recent elections with 1200 votes. Jack spoke to Focus about his new role: “The job of the Student Executive is to listen to what students want, and work with Union staff, Union Council and the Board of Trustees to make sure it happens. My individual role is the LUU Welfare officer. This means I have to make sure there is enough provision for students in general, financial, sexual and mental health issues. I am in charge of general awareness campaigns around campus. One of the key reasons why I stood is that I believe that as a student from the School of Performance and Cultural Industries I will have a fresh, creative and imaginative insight into running events and Campaigns.” Jack will start his post in July 2010.

Elizabeth Chadwick

success stories

Rachel Stevens
MANAGING PERFORMANCE
Rachel has been working as an intern at a PR and events planning company in Leeds and will be joining the team full time as of June. ‘Modules such as performance project and collaborative project have really helped me in terms of developing experience in event planning and the different writing skills used, throughout the courses for different audiences. They have helped me with the PR side of things, as well as developing confidence in speaking in front of large groups and advancing my organizational skills’. At the moment Rachel is working on the 2010 PR for cookware brand ‘Cuisinart’ and over the summer will be focusing on planning the 2010 High Heel-a-Thon in aid of Yorkshire Cancer Research, held at the end of September in the Victoria Quarter.

Grace Savage
THEATRE AND PERFORMANCE
Grace has been working at the Southbank Centre, performing in two shows as a beatboxer/actress. The first is a children’s show called the ‘The Lost Voice’ followed by family workshops and the second, a beatboxing/singing/theatrical show with Shlomo and the vocal Orchestra in ‘Boxed’ that we performed at the Bristol Old Vic, working with Director Ramin Gray. Both these shows are being performed at the E4 udderbelly festival tent outside the Southbank Centre this Summer.

Grace pictured at the Southbank Centre
Photo by Idene Roozbayani

postgraduate alumni news

Creative Writing MA graduate, Kachi Ozumba, continues to enjoy impressive success
With his debut novel ‘The Shadow of a Smile’, published by Alma Books in 2009. Named as one of its books of the year by The Observer, it is shortly to be released in an audio version, and was shortlisted for the Commonwealth Writers’ Prize for Best First Book in the African Region. It is also in the running for the Desmond Elliott Award for best debut novel. Kachi is currently teaching at Newcastle and Teeside Universities while he completes his PhD.

Vicky Hunter

Teaching and Performing success for MA Choreography Students
Samantha Green begins a new post as a Dance Lecturer at the University of Teeside. Her colleague on the part-time route, Pauline Mayers, has been awarded a position as one of one of ‘The Fouteen’ a CIDA (Creative Industries Development Agency) initiative with Yorkshire Dance Centre, supporting dance artists with innovative and rigorous approach to their work. Pauline performed the role of Desdemona in Patrice Naimbana’s theatre production of William Shakespeare’s ‘Othello’ in conjunction with the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Garry Lyons

Image courtesy of Alma Books

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“The Wife of Heracles” based itself on an updated version of Sophocles’ rarely performed work “Women of Trachis” (413BC). The performance set its scene between the conflict of love and truth with a dynamic and contemporary twist on the meaning of love between a husband and a wife. The personal journey of Heracles and Deianira was the main focus of this original adaptation, where in-depth explorations of the jealous fears of Deianira were explored. “The Wife of Heracles” was split between two dramatic acts embracing two design concepts of strong femininity in the first act and extravagant masculinity in the second. The cast and production team consisted of 24 final year students who collaborated together over a twelve-week period to produce a vivid and powerful production. A new perspective on betrayal, revenge and fate juxtaposed with a strong visual aesthetic and a vibrant physicality was the main characteristics that underpinned the performance. The Wife of Heracles communicated this powerful message through solid characterization, leaving the audience with a strong understanding of the consequences of betrayal, revenge and fate.

Written by Sophie Targett-Adams

‘Dream/Play’ was a final year undergraduate performance which was presented to the public in 12 performances at stage@leeds in April 2010. Based on August Strindberg’s 1901 text ‘A Dream Play’ which is notoriously difficult to stage, the company created an immersive performance in which the audience moved through a strange, dream-like environment. This was a collaborative devised project involving students from all of the undergraduate courses in the School and included elements of dance, lighting, text, sound and projections. The central ideas taken from the play from which performance material was created, included the presentation of an illogical unstructured world, the fleeting existence of characters, notions of repetition, everyday routines and the pitiful nature of human existence. The audience were not simply passive spectators but guided through a sensory experience in a strange environment which offered interesting opportunities for engagement and interactions with performers, objects and the space itself. Positive audience reactions indicated that we managed to create dream-like experience which evoked a complex range of feelings, half-remembered moments and resonant, rich theatrical experience. Written by Scott Palmer

Written by Sophie Targett-Adams

Visit www.stage.leeds.ac.uk For the latest showings, times and tickets.

School of Performance and Cultural Industries
FACULTY OF PERFORMANCE, VISUAL ARTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS