Third Year students perform at Nozstock

Three recent graduates from BA Theatre and Performance teamed up with two current third years to work at Nozstock Festival in Hereford this summer as part of Dr Alice O’Grady’s performance company ...floorSpace.... The company devise interactive performances for festival sites as part of Dr O’Grady’s ongoing research into participatory performance. This year they created interactive workshops on the theme of The Wilder West for the festival’s theatre tent which is programmed by PCI alumni and former...floorSpace.... member, Ali Campbell.

From left to right: Matt Conway, Molly Ward, Matt Seager, Euan Tyre & Kirsty Pennycook
Every summer the Shanghai Theatre Academy (STA) gives international students the chance to study and practise the art of *jingju* (known as *Beijing Opera* in the West).

This year, STA, a partner organisation of Leeds, provided four free places for Leeds students and the *Staging China* research network, led by Dr Ruru Li from SMLC and Susan Daniels from PCI, offered travel bursaries funded by the AHRC through the White Rose East Asia Centre. The successful applicants were Louise Kandiah (Chinese Studies), Laura Davies (Chinese Studies), Jessica Hilton (English & Theatre) and me Matthew Baker (Theatre & Performance). The three-week course is made up of practical and classroom sessions taught by leaders in their field. There were students from New Zealand, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Mexico with quite different approaches to drama, so the course challenged us with a new theatrical genre and a new teaching style.

At the start there were organised visits in the region so that we were introduced to Chinese culture and Shanghai life.

Some lessons were taught in Chinese with translation and others solely through movement. There was particular emphasis on physical balance and poise in order to adhere to the strict rules of this genre. Men often played women and vice versa, so vocal training work was critical. *Jingju* is famous for its “Four Skills,” of singing, speaking, dancing and combat. Singing comes first, and we spent hours learning the words in Mandarin. We practised our Chinese when we went out to eat and appreciated everyone’s patience.

We worked in three groups to showcase our learning in performances on the last day. These were both modern adaptations - *Miss Julie*, *Confucius* - and the 600 years old *The Fisherman’s Revenge*. Our course culminated in a farewell banquet with the staff. The course was an incredible opportunity to learn an art form that very few Westerners have the privilege of knowing, to experience different ways of teaching and learning, and to have an inside introduction to life in China.

Postgrad playwright wins Channel 4 award

Postgraduate writing student Zodwa Nyoni has won a prestigious Channel 4 Playwrights’ Bursary, for her one-act play *Boi-Boi is Dead*. The award will give Zodwa the chance to spend a year in residency at West Yorkshire Playhouse, where she’ll continue to develop her writing through workshops, rehearsed readings and collaborating with directors.

*Boi-Boi is Dead* is a bitter-sweet family drama set in Zimbabwe, and deals with the fallout from the death of a successful jazz trumpeter. Initially drafted as part of workshops at the Playhouse, the play has been intensively rewritten over the last few months as part of Zodwa’s MA in Writing for Performance and Publication, under the supervision of programme director Garry Lyons.

Zodwa was one of five C4 bursary winners selected by a judging panel which included former Artistic Director of the National Theatre Sir Richard Eyre, Mamma Mia! writer Catherine Johnson and leading BBC radio drama producer John Tydeman. News of the award came through as Zodwa was completing an apprentice poet residency at the Ilkley Literature Festival, where she has been collaborating with a jazz musician on her performance poetry.

Next generation of Arts and Humanities researchers

A successful collaboration between the White Rose universities of Leeds, York and Sheffield has received a £19m Doctoral Training Partnership award from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)

The funding will create the White Rose College of the Arts & Humanities, which together with a further contribution of £4m from the Universities, will see more than 300 fully-funded doctoral students recruited and trained over five years, with the first cohort starting in autumn 2014.

For more information please visit http://www.pci.leeds.ac.uk/pg/research-degrees/scholarships/
David Shearing wins Global Award for Installation Design

David Shearing, Research Associate in Scenography, was selected as one of 100 finalists from an entry of over 700 international designers to present his work at World Stage Design 2013. Held every four years, and staged in the UK for the first time, the event included a major exhibition and performances at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in Cardiff. At this global celebration of excellence in scenography, David’s work was recognised by the international jury who awarded him the prize for Best Installation Design. David presented his designs for ‘and it all comes down to this…’, a performance installation presented in 2012 as part of his practice-led PhD which examines the nature of audience immersion and the experience of scenography. The project was developed with Arts Council funding and with support through the stage@leeds PAD (Professional Artist Development) programme. Two BA Performance Design graduates Chloë Jayne Oldridge (2011) and Laura Price (2012) were employed as design assistants in the making of the project. This prestigious award at World Stage Design in an inaugural category recognises the importance of design-led experience in the public sphere and helps to position David’s practice and research into scenographic experience as world-leading.

Light!
Scott Palmer’s (Lecturer in Scenography) book, Light, is the latest edition in Palgrave Macmillan’s Theatre Practices series. Other books on lighting for the stage have tended to focus almost exclusively on the practical and technical aspects of the craft. In contrast, Light offers new perspectives on creative uses of light in historical and contemporary performance. It asks important critical questions about the ways in which light influences the staging of theatre and how light makes meaning.

A new approach to the ‘value’ debate
Published in July, a new book edited by Dr Anna Upchurch (Lecturer in Cultural Industries) and Dr Eleonora Belfiore (Warwick) offers a novel approach to the ongoing debate about the value of the arts and humanities today. Humanities in the Twenty-First Century: Beyond Utility and Markets examines the ways in which arts and humanities research is engaged in collaborative endeavours, both within academia and beyond, in order to address the big ethical, political, technological and environmental challenges of contemporary life.

Festival of Britten
Dr Kara McKechnie (Lecturer in Dramaturgy and Literary Management) co-organised a study event on composer Benjamin Britten, part of Opera North’s Festival of Britten, which celebrates the composer’s centenary. The event took place at the Howard Assembly Room on October 5th with artists from the three Britten operas of this season (Peter Grimes, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Death in Venice), academics and Britten experts. For more information on Opera North’s Britten season, go to http://www.operanorth.co.uk/whats-on

Antigone in Athens
Dr George Rodosthenous (Lecturer in Music Theatre) directed a new version of “Antigone” (adapted by Ashley Scott-Layton) at the Michael Cacoyiannis Foundation in Athens on 12-13-14 September 2013. The Athens version featured 10 School of Performance and Cultural Industries graduates from the past 11 years: Tom Colley, Lauren Garnham, Johnny Gould, Louisa Roberts, Charlie Woolhead, Lizzie Carter-Fox, Amy Raine Jackson, Moya McGinn, Jordan Fox, Lauren Jackson. The graduates were performing alongside 11 Greek actors. The lighting design was by third year BA(Hons) Theatre and Performance year student Matthew Baker.

PhD student wins “Best Paper Award” at international conference
George Zifkos, second year doctoral researcher, was awarded the “Best Paper Award” for his paper “Sustainability Everywhere: Problematising the ‘Sustainable Festival’ phenomenon”. The paper was presented in October 2013 at the International Conference on Sustainability Issues & Challenges in Tourism, which was hosted by the Bogazici University and the New Buckinghamshire University, and took place in Istanbul, Turkey. The conference aimed to provide a forum for academics, policy makers and industry professionals to share and discuss ideas on the recent challenges of the emerging field of sustainable tourism.

Image credit: Nathan Gibson
In the second year of our undergraduate courses, all students have the opportunity for a short industry placement. And then between the second and third year students with a good academic record may seek a placement which allows them to turn their three year BA into a four year BA (Industry) degree. In 2012-13 nine students did this. They came from every undergraduate programme in the School, and achieved their internships against fierce competition. Here are some quotations from their assessment essays.

Rebecca Henley
Enterprise Rent-A-Car

“I feel the internship structure really is focused on developing employees from university learners into graduate workers and there is no difference in this process as an intern! I have been invited back to work for Enterprise as a graduate where I will enter the business at the promotion I received before my internship finished. I am now Enterprise Rent-A-Car Campus Brand Manager at Leeds.”

Sophie Perrin
Warner Bros (film)

“Not only have I gained a huge amount of knowledge of the entertainment, media, social media, interactive, digital, marketing and film industry but I have also learned a great deal about myself, things I need to improve on, aspects of marketing that I enjoy and the things I wish to achieve in my life and through my career.”

Sam Chase
Waid Academy Scotland

“I would encourage those students who are currently debating whether to participate in the Industry-placement programme after the next academic year to seriously consider it, as I feel that it has helped me mature as a person, and left me feeling confident & prepared for my final degree year.”

Florence Simms
Spin Theatre Arts Management

“From this employment, it is clear that experiences of the workplace as a student in higher education are vital in order to set oneself apart from other candidates when competing for vacancies or working as an independent, freelance artist.”

Ellie Hanbury
TESCO London

“When reflecting on the year I have most importantly learnt that I want to work with people. During my placement I was happiest and most confident when working with clients or running meetings.”

Frances Craven
Paines Plough Theatrical Producers

“My entire placement has given me greater focus and understanding of the job I’d like to pursue, in the industry in which I wish to work.”

Abbie-Leigh Smith
DED & Saint Benedict Catholic School

“I feel that I have learnt so much through my placement by practically doing something and being in a job role where I had responsibilities.”

Charlotte Glover
Unruly Media Productions

“In my second placement, I was the only native English speaker in the office. As most of the communications were conducted in English, I was often asked to deal with queries which were delicate and in which language barriers could be problematic. This was instrumental in me quickly developing confidence in my own voice and ability to communicate effectively and tactfully in various situations.”

Isla Watton
IOU Theatre Company & IETM

“I would encourage those students who are currently debating whether to participate in the Industry-placement programme after the next academic year to seriously consider it, as I feel that it has helped me mature as a person, and left me feeling confident & prepared for my final degree year.”

In 2013-14 there will be 11 students who are following this option, working at Paines Plough Theatre Productions, Warner Bros, Greenwich Youth Theatre, Manpower, Perception Marketing, Arts & Teaching in Portugal, Zenith Optimedia, Ralph Thoresby School, Living Social Productions, Phoenix Partnership Productions. Want to know more? Contact me! Susan Daniels PCI Industry Placements Tutor: s.m.daniels@leeds.ac.uk