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THE LIVERPOOL INSTITUTE FOR PERFORMING ARTS



Photograph by Johan Persson

Offies win for Frankie

Frankie Bradshaw was named Best Set Designer at this year's Offies, as her career continues to go from strength to strength.

The awards recognise theatre Off West End in London and celebrate excellence, innovation and ingenuity at independent venues

Her work on Adding
Machine at the Finborough
Theatre was honoured in
February. "It was a really
wonderful show to work on,
so winning Best Set Design
was a real delight and very
rewarding for everyone's
hard work in pulling it off."

It's not the first time Frankie's work has received high-profile praise. The 2014 Theatre and Performance Design graduate was also a finalist for the Linbury Prize for Stage Design in 2015. "Awards and nominations are great to promote your name as a freelancer," explains Frankie. "They give you that vital stamp of recognition, that means you can go to interviews for jobs and people know already that your work has been well received, which helps massively."

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It's been a whirlwind year for mixer/producer Eduardo De La Paz. The album he mixed for Jesse & Joy was awarded a GRAMMY and a Latin GRAMMY, while he completed work on the new Charlatans album.

Un Besito Mas was named Best Contemporary Pop Vocal Album at the Latin GRAMMY Awards in November and picked up Best Latin Pop Album at the GRAMMYs in February.

"It's great to see that all the hard work is paying off and to be recognised by your peers; this shows you're going in the right direction," says Eduardo, who's from Mexico, "it was very surprising, I really didn't expect it, but I was very happy with the awards."

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Tweet success

The prestigious BroadwayWorld UK/West End Awards are designed to encourage participation UK-wide from younger audiences who are digitally savvy. It's apt then, that Adam Penford discovered earlier this year that he had won the 2016 award for Best Direction of a New Play for Boys in the Band at Park Theatre, via Twitter.

The 37-year-old says that he was 'chuffed' to receive the accolade for what he describes as a special production:

"Sometimes all of the elements come together in harmony and Boys in the Band was that combination. There was a great cast (headed by Mark Gatiss), it's a classic text but still relevant today and I got to collaborate with the writer, Mart Crowley, who is now in his 80s and living in New York.

"The play, with its gay themes, elicited a real warmth of response from quite diverse audiences because they related to the characters as people. That led to a UK tour and a West End run."

(continued on page 4)



Dance double thrill

Shakara Brown flew over 3,000 miles to audition for the record-breaking West End show, *Thriller Live*. She had returned to the UK from Dubai. Her friend Ella Redhead also pulled out all the stops to attend — she was hard at work on the final stages of her studies, when she auditioned during the Easter break.

When both dancers were asked to join the cast of the hit show, it was a double thrill: "I feel West End is on every dancer's bucket list, but *Thriller* in particular has always been a show I have aspired to appear in. It's rare to have a show where the whole track list is made up of my favourite songs," says Shakara.

"I am originally from London and so it is great to be back in my home city while being in my dream job," adds Ella.

This is not the first time the pair have performed together. They both danced in a winning choreography competition piece here in 2015.

Shakara, 23, graduated from our Dance programme that year, while Ella, 22, graduated this year, after finishing her dissertation and assessments early, to join the show

Shakara, from Port Talbot in South Wales, went on to perform in shows at Global Village, Dubai's biggest entertainment park. She loved the experience of travelling while performing, but felt the time was right to return to the UK.

The two dancers started performing with *Thriller Live* at the Lyric Theatre at the end of May, following four weeks of rehearsals. Now in its eighth year, the show is the longest running in the theatre's history. They dance in eighteen electric numbers during the two-and-a-half hour production.

For Ella, the West End role is quite a coup – it's her first professional job. She is also swing in the show and has to cover five female roles in addition to dancing. "It's a lot to learn, but it's so exciting to perform



these tracks that I grew up with. Michael Jackson has always been a huge influence," she says.

"It's lovely to work with Shakara on the show and we are both really pleased to be here representing LIPA."

In sync with Game of Thrones

What's it like to work on one of the most talked about TV shows in the world, where fever-pitch speculation and hype greet each new episode? Sound Technology graduate Rory de Carteret knows – he works on *Game of Thrones*.

"The show has a predominantly British cast and the studio where I work, Boom Post, has been recording the ADR (Automated Dialogue Replacement) since season one," explains Rory, "I was thrilled to be trusted to look after the show for the new season."

Since leaving us in 2012, 26-year-old Rory's worked on a number of high profile films and TV shows, but the interest in *Game of Thrones* makes it unique. "Security is very tight indeed. We refer to it with a different name for the entire project and all the episodes are stored on extremely secure servers.

"In terms of the plot, I am sworn to secrecy. I've signed a Non-Disclosure Agreement, which forbids me from discussing it with anyone outside of the team until its release."

Rory, who's from St Helier, Jersey, is employed as an ADR recordist and assistant mixer. ADR involves actors watching themselves on screen and revoicing their lines, ensuring they're in sync with the video. "This is done to replace poor quality sound recordings taken on set or because the director has decided to change the script during post-production."

This requires Rory, who's based in London, to re-create the on-location sound in a studio environment. "My role is to engage with the actor and make them feel as comfortable as possible while in the

"Syncing the speed of your voice to the original recording, while performing well, is a rather bizarre task, which can be incredibly frustrating and repetitive. The hardest part of my job is to keep everybody calm and enjoying themselves throughout the sometimes long days."



Double GRAMMY success for Eduardo

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Following on from that success Eduardo – who graduated from the Sound Technology course in 2011 – has been mixing the new Charlatans album *Different Days*, which features guest appearances from Paul Weller and Johnny Marr.

He got the job after being called in to work on nine tracks of their previous album in 2015. The 29-year-old admits at first it was quite daunting. "They're such an established band with this great history, I was a bit nervous. It was a case of work hard, do your best and hope they like it and they did."

That's the approach Eduardo uses for all his work and he believes it comes from his time here. "The attitude LIPA gave me was to go into every project with a positive mind-set. The need to work hard is one of the things you come out with. It's really helped me get to where I am now."

As for the GRAMMY Awards, Eduardo, who's based in London, says it is too early to judge whether the success would have an impact on his career. "I spoke to a guy I used to work with who's won awards, he said it wouldn't change the kind of work you get offered – it just means people won't question your decisions so much."

Part of the YouTube revolution

"It's been critical in every aspect of my life," says Begum Ozgur, when asked about studying in Liverpool, rather than her native Turkey. "Learning and managing to live on your own, befriending wonderful people across the globe and studying in your second language have become gifts that were once a challenge."

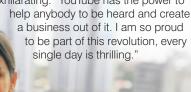
31-year-old Begum graduated from the Arts, Music and Entertainment Management degree course in 2008. After spells at Universal Music Publishing and independent digital publisher The Orchard, she moved to Google in 2015, where she's strategic partnership manager for Google-owned YouTube in Turkey and Israel.

Her job involves working with content owners, who already use YouTube, including TV channels and production companies, to grow their business and ensure there's a diverse range of content

One of the most enjoyable parts of her job is seeing the success of content creators she works with. "Orkun Işıtmak is one of my partners. He's been a YouTuber since he was 15-years-old uploading card trick videos. He's now on his way to becoming a mainstream celebrity with over 3 million subscribers."

YouTube claims to have over 1 billion users and is starting to deliver audience numbers to some creators, which are well beyond the reach of many conventional TV channels. One of Begum's partners is successfully tapping into this potential. "Stolk produces a John Oliver-style talk show for the internet generation. He's already reaching half-amillion subscribers in the course of a few months."

The success of YouTube has helped to transform how media is consumed and for Begum being part of that is exhilarating. "YouTube has the power to





Offies win for Frankie continued from page 1

In April, Frankie – who's from London – was back in the North West to work on Moth at Hope Mill Theatre, Manchester. It allowed her to team up with Elena Hilton and Paul McEvoy, who are current Theatre & Performance Design and Technology students. "It's great working with LIPA students as you have a brilliant shared language and approach to work.

"It's lovely to go to LIPA's design and technical course when looking for people to come and work with you, as you know they'll be good."

Frankie's just completed a tour with Watermill Theatre's Nesting, with new productions at the Stephen Joseph Theatre in Scarborough and the New

Wolsey Theatre in Ipswich next on the agenda.

The time she spent here continues to be important to her. She currently lives with two designers who also attended LIPA and believes the course gave the allround skills to get her career off the

Since leaving, she's learnt her passion for her work has been invaluable. "Making it as a theatre designer is really hard and incredibly competitive, but if you really love the work and the industry and you're prepared to work your socks off, it is one of the most exciting and rewarding jobs ever."

Alyssa makes her own success

As a singer-songwriter, multi-instrumentalist and producer, Alyssa Bonagura's star is shooting across the country music scene.

Last year, her solo album Road Less Travelled, which she co-produced with Mark Petaccia, entered the iTunes country chart at number 11 on its release. In December, she made her debut at the home of country, the Grand Ole Opry.

Her songwriting successes include top 40 country hits with Jana Kramer and Jessi James Decker and a top 20 release, This Christmas.

Her biggest hit, though, was inspired by the three years she spent studying for her Sound Technology degree before graduating in 2009.

Alyssa explains: "Steven Tyler came to a show of mine last year. I had no idea he was in the audience until after I played my set and he walked up to me and asked if I could send him my song I Make My Own Sunshine, which I wrote while I was living in Liverpool 'cause it rained so much!

"Of course, I sent it to him and he recorded his own version for his debut country album, which went to number one on the country billboard chart. I cried when I heard it. I was so happy. You just never think that a legend like that will sing a song

For the 29-year-old's latest project she is combining her musical talents with those of Ruby Stewart (daughter of Rod) to form The Sisterhood. The duo's signature blend of West Coast folk, rock and heartfelt harmonies has seen them open for Rod on his UK tour and appear at Caesar's Palace.

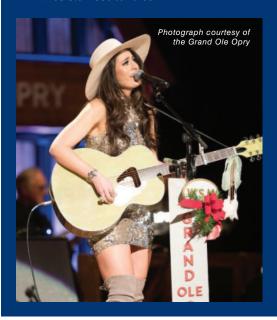
They have also opened for Gary Clark Jr and had their own successful UK headline tour, arranged with the help of Alyssa's best friend and fellow graduate Anna-Sophie Mertens (Management, 2009), who works at Live Nation.

The Sisterhood are about to sign a record deal in Nashville and are busy writing for their first album.

Following a couple of summer dates supporting Rod, they will start work in the studio. Alyssa tells us: "I produce and record everything at my home studio in Franklin, Tennessee, where I was born. It's called Tree Top studios because it overlooks the plush green land, like a tree house. It's magic there!

It sounds like the perfect place for The Sisterhood to conjure up a spellbinding debut.

www.alyssabonagura.com www.thesisterhoodband.com



Rebecca's brilliant start

Acting as assistant stage manager on two different shows a day with over 420 props and three guns to coordinate was quite a challenge. Add the fact that the production marked the stage première of a series of novels with a cult following and Rebecca Gee had high expectations to meet.

All of which was fine by our 2016 Theatre and Performance Technology graduate, who relished the variety of working on *My Brilliant Friend* at The Rose, Kingston, this spring.

The production, starring Niamh Cusack, condensed Elena Ferrante's much-loved Neapolitan quartet into two shows with a combined length of over five hours.

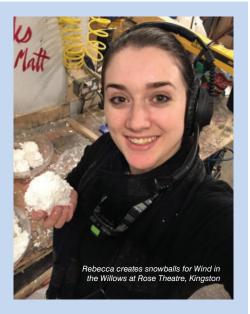
Rebecca, 22, explains: "The majority of our show days had a Part 1 matinee and a Part 2 evening performance. Props-wise for me that meant completely stripping certain prop tables and filling them with props for the next show, then after the evening show resetting them back for the next day.

"It was fun to have different shows in the day rather than a feeling of déjà vu from the matinee. They were both really busy shows, but in different ways. For the majority of Part 2, for example, I was armourer for three blank firing guns."

She was also pleased to discover a fellow LIPA graduate on the show, Adam Burton (Acting, 1999), who played several of the male characters.

Rebecca, originally from Wigan but now living in London, will be spending the summer as assistant stage manager on *Il Ritorno D'Ulisse In Patria* at The Grange Festival in Hampshire. It's the biggest operatic production she has worked on, though not her first. Her previous credits include English Touring Opera and St James Theatre.

Some of these jobs have come via recommendations from other LIPA alumni, but Rebecca puts effort into filling her work



diary and is currently planning the rest of her working year. She sums up her approach: "I set myself the aim of being the hardest working person in the room and the easiest to get along with."

Tweet success

continued from page 1

The 2001 Acting graduate knew from the end of his first year of studies that he wanted to be a director. His advice to any actor who wants to follow the same path is: "Just do it, call yourself a director, make your own work. I wouldn't change a thing about my training, because I feel so comfortable with actors in the rehearsal room. Other directors, who have possibly gone down a more academic route, may have a better understanding of the play, but they feel less at ease with the cast."

Next year will bring a new set of challenges for Adam, when he takes up the mantle of artistic director of Nottingham Playhouse. The appointment feels like a homecoming, as he is from the city and his love of theatre stems from visiting the venue as a child.

When the position became vacant, he did a crash course in artistic direction. The day he applied, he bumped into an artistic director of a leading UK theatre, who had just recommended him for the post, so it really felt like fate lending a hand.

He is now gearing up to create work



that people will travel from around the country to see and to give the people of Nottingham a theatre to make them proud.



Son et lumière

There are artists who want to see their name in lights; others prefer a more low-key approach. For freelance lighting designer Olly Suckling, the first step in illuminating bands including Maximo Park and Temples, is finding a shared vision.

Olly explains: "Inspiration for the designs usually starts with a discussion with the band and their management about how they envisage the show's look. Some bands want to make a real statement with a light show: others like to use it to add an atmosphere, but not take the attention away from the music.

"One of my favourite designs was for Maximo Park. It was a simple concept of writing the band's name in lights, but it made a really bold statement and got a lot of attention.

"Another is the design I'm currently using for the band Temples. It uses photography soft boxes, which have been modified to use LED tape. These can be folded down and flown in a Pelican case around the world for shows and festivals."

Our 2009 Theatre and Performance Technology graduate has also designed the lighting for LIPA artists including Ady Suleiman and Clean Cut Kid, although the connection started on the road, rather than during his studies.

"I'd say it's almost like a sixth degree of separation thing. You're never far from someone who's been to LIPA," laughs Olly.

The 29-year-old, from Herefordshire, is currently on tour around the UK, Europe, USA and Japan with Temples.

When he's not putting musicians in a good light, Olly works on projects including *Extreme Robots*, the live tour based on hit TV show *Robot Wars*. Aside from designing the lighting for the spectacle, he also looks after special effects, video and content creation.

Sister act

When dancer Grace Turner and her two sisters were growing up, such was their desire to perform together, friends compared them to the Von Trapps from *The Sound of Music*. "People even called us the Von Turner family".

Fast forward to 2017 and they're still performing together, having set up their own business TurnAround Dance Theatre.

Grace – who's 26 and from Lancaster – completed the Foundation Diploma in Performing Arts Dance in 2009, before going on to the Dance degree course and graduating in 2012. She admits it's a surprise to have ended up working with Ellen and Lilly. "There was quite a bit of competition and quarrelling between us, but, when each of us graduated, it just made sense to become a company.

"We had each grown up and matured with different influences and styles from our training. Also the dance industry is a hard place to be on your own and having three of us means that we can support each other."

TurnAround Dance Theatre was set up in 2014. Its aim is to create work that touches, moves and inspires audiences, while also pushing artistic boundaries. The company also has a special focus on education.

Grace, who's returned to Lancaster, after spells in London, Sheffield and Manchester, believes being sisters does make a difference to their work. "Although we trained at different institutions, our inherent movement style remains the same. This is also reflected in our



singing, our composer Lee Affen calls this 'Blood Harmonies' because our voices are so similar."

Despite these familial similarities, there are differences, which are just as important. "We find that because of our different skills (Grace specialised in aerial at LIPA), we each have things to teach each other."

TurnAround Dance Theatre is currently working on a new show *The Thief, The Fox and The Phoenix*. It's an interactive outdoor performance for family audiences, following the story of a lonely boy, who befriends a fox

and sets off on an adventure to find the phoenix. "It's exciting, fun and educational. The audience go on a roller coaster of emotions with our characters."

The show's completed the first stage of its research and development, which has been funded by the Arts Council of England. Feedback from initial performances has been very positive and Grace can't wait to take it out on tour. "I never understood the term bursting with pride until I created this show. The reaction from audiences has been overwhelming."

Keeping the classics alive

First things first, *The Classic Rock Show* shouldn't be confused with a tribute act. "I always think it's more like going to watch an orchestra playing classical music," explains James Cole (Popular Music and Sound Technology, 2007), who's the show's MD and guitarist. "It's not a tribute show. It's just fantastic music being played by great musicians."

As well as James, who's from Southport, The Classic Rock Show also features graduates Henry Burnett (2014) - keyboards, vocals; Emily Gervers (2003) - vocals, keyboards and Karl Penney (2004) - drums.

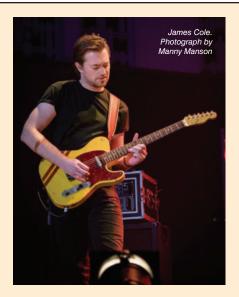


That four of the band all went to LIPA is no coincidence. "One of the important things I learnt at LIPA was how to be able to communicate with other musicians," explained James – who's 28, "so it helps to make sure you choose ones who have the same passion as you and the same philosophy."

25-year-old Henry Burnett – who's from Nottingham, but, like James, is now based in Liverpool – joined the show at the beginning of the year. "Most of my employment now comes through contacts that I made as a result of my time at LIPA, so this certainly reinforces the ethos that it pays to network while you're there."

So far this year they've completed a 29-date UK tour, including a gig at the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall and have performed their first shows in the US. Henry noticed a real difference in crowd reaction. "The UK audiences are a lot more polite than US ones. They treat the show as a theatre performance. In the States, the crowd are yelling and shouting even before the show has started."

Key to their success is which songs make the set-list and the ability to change it from gig to gig. "In the UK, Rainbow's *Since You've Been Gone* goes down great," says James, "it's like our home run, but in the US they look at you like you've got two heads."



Fortunately the band has a wealth of material to choose from, which James believes, is only getting bigger. "As time goes on, bands like Nirvana and Foo Fighters become accepted as classic rock, so we keep it fresh by including them."

Next for *The Classic Rock Show*, another UK tour - with even more venues, while a second trip to the US is on the cards, James can't wait. "The reaction we get from people – and the reviews we get – are great. People seemed to be really enthused by it."

Andrew's Olivier nomination

"It was a real surprise, musicals are something I only do occasionally." In March, Acting graduate Andrew Langtree* was nominated for an Olivier Award. "It wasn't even on the cards as far as I was concerned, but my family was thrilled, although fairly quietly – I think they're now used to the ups and downs of my occupation."

40-year-old Andrew was shortlisted for Best Supporting Actor in a Musical for his role in *Groundhog Day* at the Old Vic, an award eventually won by Adam J Bernard for *Dreamgirls*. "My aim has never been to win awards or get nominations, what's more important is to try to do work I enjoy, but to get that recognition was great."

The show is a musical version of the classic film. When the idea was first muted, it was greeted with scepticism and Andrew understands why. "It was such an iconic film, a cult film and Stephen Sondheim once gave up on the idea of adapting the movie, because he didn't think the film could be improved on."

Andrew though, never had any doubts. "I'd worked with most of the team before and was excited by it. It's such a great story. I think Tim Minchin (music and lyrics) along with Danny Rubin (book) make a fantastic team, then when you add director Matthew Warchus too, I was pretty confident it could be a success."

Originally from St. Helens, but now based in London, Andrew graduated in 1998, since then he's worked in TV, film and radio, has performed extensively on stage in the West End, and for theatre companies including the Royal Exchange, the National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Over those 19 years as an actor, Andrew says there's one piece of advice he received at LIPA which has been particularly useful. "Don't worry about what you can't control. Don't let those worries creep into your mind and hinder your performance. Rather, focus on how you can be best prepared."

*Andrew Reid at LIPA



Shout! to the top

"I joined the management course with the intention of managing bands and artists," explains Max Emmerson*. "Then, in the second year, when I had my first taste of theatre producing, I was instantly hooked."

Since then Max – who graduated in 2015 – hasn't looked back. He's now assistant producer at the Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester. "Some days we're developing a brand new production with an array of exciting new writers. Other days we're thinking about programming classics or Shakespeare.

"I also really enjoy working on the different scales, from one night in the Studio, to coproductions with some of the biggest regional theatres in the world."

23-year-old Max – who's originally from Stockport – worked on the successful LIPA fringe production *Shout! The Mod Musical*. He was part of the team that developed the production from its origins in the Sennheiser Studio Theatre all the way to being staged at the Royal Court Theatre, Liverpool. "That experience has equipped me with the skills and confidence of developing a show from fringe level to professional production.

"The support LIPA offered the production over the two-year development was priceless. We had mentoring from staff, use of the buildings' excellent resources and access to financial support. It simply could not have happened without LIPA's help."

That experience was pivotal to Max's career and continues to be influential even now. "Shout! opened a lot of doors and helped start lots of conversations with various venues, as well as with other producers and investors.



"The producers and investors are people I am still working with today."

The future's looking bright for Max, both at the Royal Exchange and beyond. "I am currently working on a number of large-scale premières for the theatre, which I have been involved in from their initial concept.

"Seeing their development and following the show's journey is really exciting. Some of the shows won't go into production for two years, but it's an exciting sign of what's yet to come."

Away from the Royal Exchange, Max's rising reputation as a producer has helped him become a trustee for Manchester Pride. He said: "I'm incredibly grateful and excited, to be working with such an inspiring organisation."

*Max Unsworth at LIPA

Dancing on air

Six years ago, during the first summer break of her degree, Sianna Bruce attended Irish Aerial Dance Fest. She had never touched a piece of aerial kit before, but from her first experience of aerial dance, she was captivated.

So started a passion for aerial work that has taken the 2013 Dance graduate to Venice to dance with Il Posto, Italy's first company specialising in vertical dance, and to Costa Rica to train with Danzaire.

A member of innovative aerial company Fidget Feet, Sianna is currently working on the research stages of a groundbreaking project with them. *Hip Hopera* is a collaboration between Fidget Feet and Motionhouse, creators of large-scale dance-circus spectaculars. As its name suggests, the work tells a story by melding elements of hip hop, opera and aerial in a unique way.

Aside from her work on this fledgling project, she is also developing a dance trapeze duet with dance partner and Cyr wheel artist Ronan Brady, inspired by her training in contact dance.

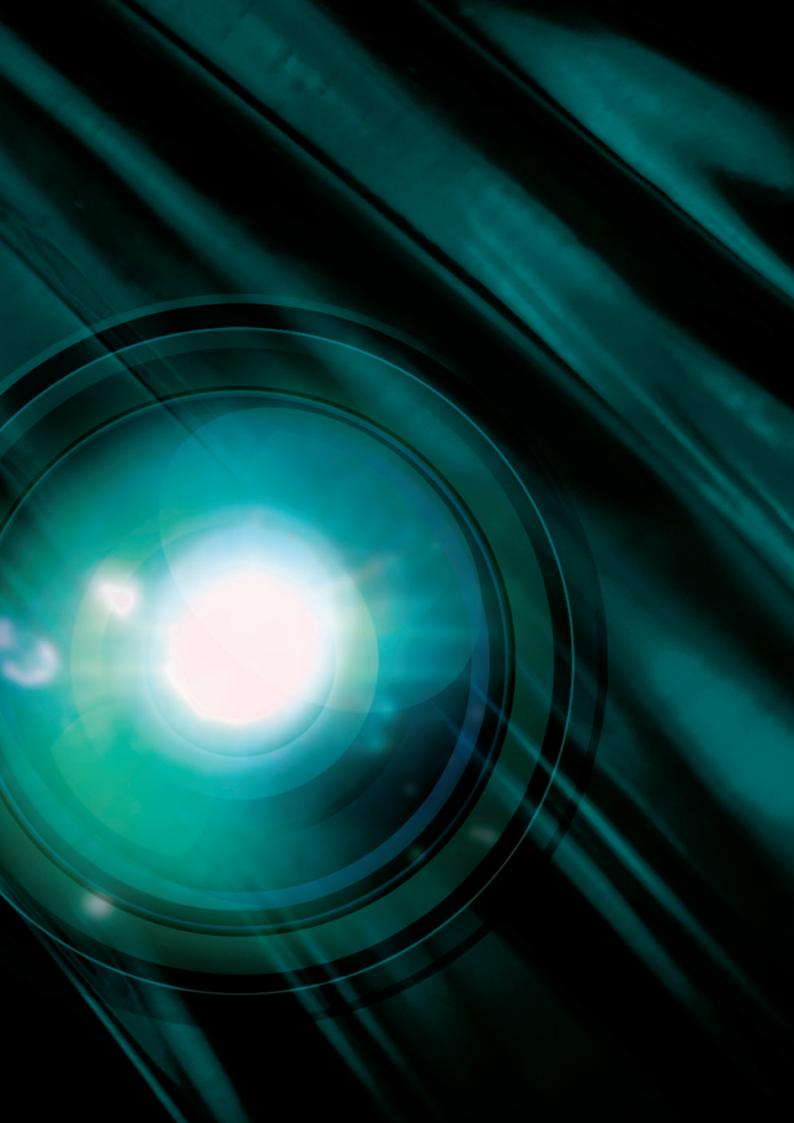


Over the last year, the 26-year-old has established her own company SiAerial Dance. Originally from Dundee but now based in Galway, Sianna offers workshops and classes in the air and on the floor as well as creating performance through her company. She gets support from Creative Scotland and Culture Ireland.

Sianna says: "I am creating work that isn't represented enough in theatre. For me there is a lot to be said between the floor and the air.

"This summer, I got to spend two weeks teaching Aerial Dance Trapeze Lab at Irish Aerial Dance Fest. It was very exciting to inspire others with a love of aerial, where my own started. It feels like things have gone full circle for me."

www.siaerialdance.com





Managing musical differences

When Tom Satchwell left us in 2013, he hit the ground running. Four years on – and he's international marketing manager of arguably the country's biggest entertainment company, Live Nation UK.

A graduate of the Management degree, he's been in the job since November 2015, developing and managing marketing campaigns for tours across Europe – working with a huge variety of artists and markets. "Each genre, act and market is different," explains Tom.

"Something that works well in Denmark doesn't necessarily work in Switzerland or Portugal. Hip hop is huge in Holland, but not so much in Germany. Some markets are more advanced when it comes to digital marketing.

"You have to accept each market's cultural, technological and sometimes legal differences when building campaigns."

For Tom, who's from Tamworth, the biggest challenge is



constantly finding new ways to market tours. "How do we obtain or create content with an artist whose time is in such high demand? How do we make content that differs from what is already out there and that will engage both the artist and fans and break through the noise?"

Upon leaving us, Tom worked for Fortitude Magazine as marketing manager, before getting his first position at Live Nation UK in September 2014.

The 25-year-old believes LIPA – and Liverpool – set him up well. "I built skills through work experience opportunities provided by LIPA and then through connections I made in Liverpool, setting up my own projects, and saying yes to nearly every opportunity that came to me.

"The most important thing I learnt at LIPA was to try anything and everything that interests you. I'd say you're there to try and succeed and try and fail. It's tougher when you leave."

Tom – who's based in London – is currently working on Guns N' Roses European Stadium tour, as well as the company's next run of arena announcements. Although challenging, he says the job is incredibly rewarding. "The feeling you get when you walk into a sold-out venue, whatever the size and see people having an amazing time and knowing you've played a role in getting them there, is profoundly satisfying."

Spread the word and be paid

Want to share your experiences of studying here with prospective students (and get paid for it)?

We want to build on our network of enthusiastic graduates from both our performance and making performance possible courses to promote us at school and college events across the country.

During 2015/16 our graduates supported over 35 events, engaging with over 1,200 prospective students. If you would like to be considered for occasional work opportunities near you, please contact us at the email address provided.

As part of our network, we aim to match you to suitable events

taking place in your area which could include careers events and practical workshops. This will help us to spread the word about what we offer to a wider audience and allow you to supplement your income with informal work, talking to young people about your time here.

There are also opportunities for graduates living in Liverpool to get involved in teaching supporting our widening participation programme.

For more information and to register your interest, please email Ben Leventhall – Access and Schools/Colleges Liaison Manager: b.leventhall@lipa.ac.uk

Bronnie mixes with the big names



"Wirral Live was amazing, I loved being part of such an incredible line-up." In May, Bronnie Hughes played on the same bill as Madness, Little Mix and The Libertines. "We had nearly 9,000 people in the stadium, while we were on stage, so it's by far the biggest crowd I've played to."

Wirral Live was a three-day event at Tranmere Rovers' Prenton Park. 19-year-old Bronnie performed on the last day, supporting Little Mix. "They were really friendly and I had a long chat to Jade Thirlwall backstage, who gave me lots of encouragement to keep pushing with my music career."

Playing to such a large audience, many of whom would have been unfamiliar with Bronnie's work, meant some careful decisions had to be made. "My musical director and I debated how many covers we should have in the set versus originals, but we decided to mainly play original songs that I've written in recent years so that they could get a real sense of what I'm about as an artist."

Bronnie, who completed the Foundation Certificate in Popular Music & Sound Technology in 2016, will go on her first solo tour next year. She says concerts like the one at Wirral Live are vital preparation. "I'm really excited to tour the UK as a headline act, but actually it's really important to be a support act as often as you can in the early years, in order to grow your fan base."

Next up for Bronnie, who's from the Wirral, is a September tour with Room 94 before a series of live dates in Poland. After that, preparations will start for next year's UK tour when her links to LIPA will be vital. "My entire band is made up of current students and graduates. My bassist Josh Betley is also my musical director.

"My drummer Tom Atkinson and lead guitarist Arnár Stefánsson are both currently studying there too, while my guitarist Patrick Doyle graduated from the Sound Technology degree. LIPA is like a family and I love how welcome you are even after you've graduated."



See Emily play

When multi-instrumentalist Emily Linden began playing with the band on a small show at the Edinburgh Fringe, she had little idea where the humble start would lead.

Our Ladies of Perpetual Succour went on to tour twice and subsequently sold out the National Theatre. In April, the story of six Catholic schoolgirls on a chaotic trip to a choir competition picked up the Olivier Award for Best New Comedy. Now the show is enjoying a transferred run at the Duke of York's Theatre, West End.

The 2013 Music graduate says that the small cast and crew, who started together on the show back in 2015, now feel like family. She explains how they reacted to the win: "It was absolute disbelief, but that soon turned into utmost pride. It's an honour for our little show to have such a big platform now. As our director Vicky Featherstone has said, there's nothing like this in the West End at the moment and it really

gives young, working class women a voice in the theatre world."

The 25-year-old plays electric guitar, acoustic guitar, bass and mandolin in the onstage band. During her studies, she taught herself slide guitar and mandolin and she would recommend that anyone with the opportunity to learn another instrument grabs the chance: "Multi-instrumentalists are highly sought after, not only in theatre, but in bands as well. The more instruments you can play, the more likely you'll be considered for a job because of what you can bring to the table, especially with new theatre."

At the moment, the show is scheduled to run until September. After that Emily, from Whitwick in Leicestershire, will be returning to Liverpool to play at the Royal Court, where she has worked regularly since graduating. She will then be heading off to London to work with an emerging pop artist.

Life on the road

"There are times when you miss home and people," says Joel Naisbitt, as he discusses being part of a successful touring production, "but when you're getting paid to do what you love – it makes it so much easier."

Joel – who graduated from the Sound Technology degree just last year – is sound no.1 with *The Fantastic Mr Fox* tour, a role which sees him overseeing all elements of the show's sound.

The tour started in November in Southampton and finished at the Lowry, Salford in July. "Life on the road is all the things you expect it to be. A lot of fun, both tiring and rewarding.

"We took the show to the UAE for two weeks, so getting paid to work there was definitely a highlight. 9am shows aren't the most pleasant, but having the rest of the day off in Dubai certainly made up for it."

The touring experience was new to Joel, but he believes three years here meant he was ready for it. "I think it is hard to prepare for being on the road, without actually going and doing it.

"Having said that, I've never felt out of my depth at any point during this run and I guess that's a testament to how LIPA has prepared our minds to be ready for any challenge."

Before joining the tour Joel, who's from Stockton-on-Tees, spent the months after graduating freelancing, which included work at Glastonbury, Creamfields and V Festival.

The transition from being a student to working life has been a smooth one. "I'd been freelancing around Liverpool since my second year and it was just a case of accepting more work and turning less down."

The 24-year-old believes the ease with which he made the switch is largely down to LIPA. "The work ethic and attitude was the most important thing I learnt.

"It can't be taught easily, but being surrounded by people who love what they do, lecturers and students, really helps."

Over the summer Joel plans to move from Liverpool to London, with six weeks of work already lined up at The Young Vic, along with opportunities to work overseas also in the pipeline.

Leah unleashed

"Don't hold back, you can't afford to, just go hell for leather and see what happens," Acting graduate Leah Walker is describing her new approach to work and auditions. "It's working for me so far."

Leah left us in 2015, since then she's had regular TV work, including appearances in Sky's *Lucky Man*, *Citizen Khan* for the BBC and Disney's *The Evermoor Chronicles*. On stage, she's performed in *The Skriker* with Maxine Peake as part of the Manchester International Festival and alongside Josie Lawrence in *Amédée* at the Birmingham Rep.

The 22-year-old from Birmingham admits when she first started her career she found auditioning very stressful. "You want to make an imprint on the industry when you get the chance, so it is nerve-wracking."

Now though, she's able to approach her work, and auditions, with a new sense of composure, something that's partly come from appearing with Maxine Peake. "It was amazing to watch her, someone at the top of their craft, to see her was very inspiring. How she had this sense of calmness – which wasn't the case with me at the start of my career.

"I've tried to have that air of confidence, to believe in my ability and that's what I try to do and it's really helped me with jobs. I just try



to trust myself and trust my instincts and so far it's working."

Having got her career off the ground, Leah believes she can take a more long term view. "I've realised now, it's a slow burner, your career, not a race. When I first left LIPA, I felt it all had to happen, but you need to take your time. You don't want to explode and then disappear."

This more strategic approach has even led to her turning down audition opportunities. "At the same time as getting to as many auditions as possible, there have been a couple of times when I've thought: that's not really me, that's not where I want to be going. You do have to know what kind of performer you want to be and what will be good for your career."

Glastonbury debut

For Liverpool-based band She Drew The Gun, featuring Music graduate Siân Monaghan, 2016 was a real breakthrough year, with a series of high profile gigs and national press coverage.

This year the success has continued with a live performance for BBC Music Day, gigs in South Korea and a slot on Liverpool Sound City's main stage - but for 28-year-old Siân, there's one event over the last 18 months that stands head and shoulders above the rest.

"Our first Glastonbury gig was my favourite. We were told afterwards that it was the busiest Sunday morning crowd the John Peel Stage had ever had.

"It was such a fun gig we just wanted to do it all over again. Lots of our friends and family were there too. It felt really special."

They got to play Glastonbury in 2016 after winning the festival's Emerging Talent competition. Drummer Siân – who graduated in 2010 - says the timing was perfect. "The first release of the album *Memories of the Future* was just about to drop.

"We went on tour a week or two after winning the final and were still absolutely buzzing from that night. It gave us a boost but also made us raise our game too. All of the finalists were just amazing."



Siân on She Drew The Gun's recent UK tour. Photograph by Simon Lee

The album *Memories of the Future* has received positive reviews since its release, Siân – who's from Hampshire, but now based in London – says recording it was a great experience. "You're trying different things and everyone's throwing ideas around. I remember hearing *Where I End and You Begin* on the radio the first time it got aired and thinking: 'Yeah we've got a good sound here'.

"Ever since hearing Louisa's (Roach) earlier songwriting, I've always thought she was an amazing musician and writer. It was definitely a super exciting time making that record with her and (producer) James Skelly."

In May, the band were awarded the influential Get Into This (GIT) Award – which celebrates and champions the best new music on Merseyside. "The local support in Liverpool is fabulous and we don't take it for granted," says Siân. "It's amazing how so many people have got behind the band."

Inspired designs

"I think it's a process of osmosis," explains set and costume designer Chiara Stephenson, as she discusses inspiration. "What you come up with does, to a degree, depend on what you allow yourself to experience."

If the 31-year-old's work credits since leaving here are anything to go by, inspiration doesn't appear to have been in short supply for her. "I get a lot of aesthetic ideas from art and design and exhibitions,

seeing lots of theatre definitely helps too, so I've found the most inspiring thoughts have never come from me thinking alone in a quiet room

"They tend to be more frequently born out of conversations with the wider team. A visual language is often created by two brains. Bouncing ideas around is where the inspired moments are born."

Chiara – who's from London - graduated from our Theatre & Performance Design degree in 2008. She spent two years working with double Tony and Olivier Awardwinning set and costume designer Christopher Oram, before becoming associate designer for Es Devlin. "Working for Christopher for two years and Es for six have definitely been the biggest influences, inspiration and greatest training I could have wished for.

"Both are very different in their approach, but you soon learn it's a case of never



being too precious with ideas and never be afraid to chuck the ideas in the bin and start again."

As well as her associate work, she's also completed her own design credits for the Bristol Old Vic and Sigur Ros, among many others, and last year, she was part of the team that redeveloped London's Bush Theatre.

The project meant Chiara had to apply her skills to a new set of challenges, designing the interior of the new library bar, reading room, new indoor and outdoor terrace area, as well as other public areas of the building. "It's the first thing I've worked on that's of permanence and not going to end up in a skip in a couple of months, like a lot of the sets I've done.

"With the refurbishment, it's been a case of making more subtle design decisions. Making a space people will really want to spend time in has been a dream."

Mental health matters NOW

According to the Mental Health Foundation, mental health problems affect one in ten children and young people. It's a subject that is close to the heart of Annie Neat Farnfield. So she is thrilled to be working in a role that involves giving children a platform and a voice to raise issues such as depression and anxiety.

Annie is artistic director of the NOW Festival, run by Merseyside Youth Association. This year's festival involved 21 schools and an estimated 200 young people. The 24-year-old landed the job after spending part of her final year of studies helping in schools with the programme. She obviously made a big impression. When the post became available, the festival director proposed Annie for the position.

Her role involves visiting schools and youth groups, holding workshops and helping participants to devise performances across drama, film and music. She also works closely with teachers to ensure a smooth running festival.

Annie says: "The festival takes place at the Epstein Theatre in Liverpool over three days in February during children and young people's mental health week. We also run a post-festival tour around schools. In March, we had four shows touring schools for a week and we are staging a summer tour. It's a year-long process.

"Each performance was delivered to the performers' own school or youth group, so reached thousands more young people and that's not including the tour. The adults watching felt proud and privileged to have such caring young people in the city and wanted to support them to keep talking. The young people in the audience felt empowered and it was a valuable learning experience for many, not only about mental health, but about drama too. It was a great space for sharing ideas."

Busy Annie is also working with Three Mugs of Tea, a theatre group that she co-founded during her studies, along with fellow 2016 Community Drama graduates Emily Darley, Rachael McDougall and Katie Milner. They hold a weekly youth theatre, Mini Mugs and September will see them touring around schools with *Sticks and Stones*, a play about mental health, written by Annie.

Helping the homeless

Homelessness is rarely out of the headlines and appears to be a growing problem. At the end of 2016 Government figures put the number of people sleeping rough in England alone at 4,134 – a rise of 16% on the previous year.

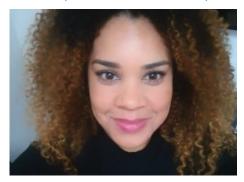
One of our graduates working to help those in need is Kiri Grant. She finished the Community Drama degree (now our Applied Theatre and Community Drama course) in 2009 and works for Cardboard Citizens in London.

The theatre company works with homeless people and those at risk of being homeless, developing their skills and confidence while producing theatre that aims to raise awareness of the issue and spark debate, challenging current thinking and policies.

"We are seeing a rise in the people we work with who need to access help," explains Kiri – who is young persons' development manager. "The situation with homeless people changes rapidly, due to people's economic situations and you have to be ready to respond to that.

"Fortunately we've got good support around the city and if someone comes in and needs help that night we know who we need to contact, whether that be a hostel or an organisation like Crisis."

Cardboard Citizens was set up by LIPA Companion Adrian Jackson in 1991, as well as helping homeless people, it also works with young offenders and young people not in education, employment or training. Alongside the theatrical productions, it also offers free drama and performance-related workshops.



Kiri – who's from London - works with 16- to 25-years-olds. Part of her role involves helping them to achieve nationally recognised qualifications, including the Arts Award, which aims to get people to grow their creativity and leadership skills and PEARL, which is a practical hands-on qualification designed to allow learners to demonstrate their skills in building relationships and working with others.

The work can be challenging – but also very rewarding. "When you see someone who may have been so shy when they came in, and then to see them heading on a pathway that's going to reward them, to have been part of that is incredible," says Kiri.

"You experience a mixture of emotions, you're proud of that person – who you've helped and supported. Cardboard Citizens is a family and they become part of that, so you feel pride and happy for them."

Turning back time

The memories came flooding back for some of our alumni who graduated from 2001 to 2006 on Saturday 13th May. They met up with old friends and teaching staff over a pint or two (pictures 1-3) and a bite to eat, including some LIPA-themed cupcakes (picture 4). A trip to our newly-renovated Arts Building for a showing of graduation videos in the lecture theatre elicited cheers of recognition whenever they spotted their younger selves onscreen (picture 5). There was even a spot of photo booth fun (picture 6).













Making a stand

Channel 4 fundraiser Stand Up To Cancer won the Royal Television Society Award for Best Live Event 2016 and was also nominated for a BAFTA in the same category. Management graduate Dean Swift is the campaign's senior talent relations manager. "We're very proud, I don't think any charity telethon has been nominated for these awards before."

Stand Up To Cancer started life as a US TV telethon and was launched in the UK in 2012 by Channel 4 and Cancer Research UK. As well as a live five hour TV show, the build-up campaign includes a series of TV specials, including in 2016 a revamped celebrity edition of The Crystal Maze.

"For me, the most challenging part is making sure we fulfil all of the talent requirements. We have incredible support from high profile individuals and completely rely on their goodwill," explains Dean.

"It can be tricky getting what we need done, while working around their diaries and day jobs, but we are very lucky – over 350 artists were involved in last year's campaign."

The 2016 telethon raised over £15.7 million and featured appearances from Michael Bublé, James Corden and Britney Spears among many others.

Dean, who's from Portsmouth, graduated in 2005. After a spell freelancing he worked for Comic Relief for eight years before joining Stand Up To Cancer in 2014. The 32-year-old says it's an incredibly satisfying job. "I know it sounds like a cliché but the most rewarding part is knowing all the effort we put in is for the greater good.

"Every single penny raised by Stand Up To Cancer goes directly to research. The scientists are making remarkable progress and discoveries in the lab every single day."



Update from our founder



We've only just seen a bunch of engaging alums who joined us, as you can read opposite, for the recent reunion we held here. Just like our See Me Now days, when graduates return to share the reality of their working lives (just as second years are thinking about their career plans), it is simply the best moment to hear how you are making your way in the world. It's why we started and why we continue.

One memory to share: Leanne Best (Acting, 2002), who seems to be in every box set I buy, from *Line of Duty*, to *Ripper Street* and *Fortitude*, gave us her wide-eyed Liverpool reaction at being in the cast and on set for the latest *Star Wars* (in which she appears) surrounded by many of the characters she'd grown up with, by saying: 'Stick a fork in me I'm done'.

Tom Hassall (Acting, 2013) has just written to me with an idea: he wanted to bring his girlfriend Faye (also Acting, 2013) back to Liverpool 'for a visit', when the real reason was to propose to her on the spot where they first met within our main building. Now, isn't that a romantic idea?

I ended last year's update with the news of our funding cut. The issue is still going on. We've established the funding body did not follow their published process. Everyone, who we have asked to read through the documents, agrees and that is a lot of people now. But they won't budge. We are, however, being encouraged by the funding body to apply to their one discretionary fund, so there is a sign that there could be a workable solution.

Aside from this, our Prime Minister, despite pressure, still insists that international students are migrants. No, they aren't, any more than everything in a garage is a car. I suspect we are the only country in the world that adopts this mad reclassification and the battle isn't over yet.

Governments seem to have an unerring capacity to spot what's going well and then, it seems, proceed to muck it up. We continue to fight about the narrowing of the school curriculum, as we put in a bid to open a high school. There are still more applicants than places for our primary and sixth form.

Our most glamorous moment happened just recently, when Paul and Woody Harrelson were here at the same time: Paul to do his usual mentoring of third year singer/songwriters, while, later on, Woody showed us his unique film (acted, directed and produced by him) Lost in London, and took questions afterwards with Paul in the audience and stayed chatting with our students for hours in our bar later on. Woody seems to be the un-starriest star (80 films behind him, aside from True Detective) I've met (and seems devoted to us). Is this a Texan thing, dude? As you can read on the back page, he's becoming one of our Companions this year.

One good thing our current government has done. Finally, finally, it's been recognised that university league tables irrationally favour institutions with an outstanding research profile. 'Irrationally' because higher education isn't just about research. What happened to teaching and learning? As you know, we don't believe research is some sort of bolt on; it's what you do, along with reflection, as you up your game, so we were hoping to do well. The results of the Teaching Excellence Framework have just been announced. With all the originality of the Olympic Games, Gold was again the top and this is what we were awarded. And not just that. According to the THES, we were 15th in the whole country, ahead of Oxford University. How surprising is that?

Graduation 2017

At our graduation in July, we are awarding our Companionships to eight people, who have shared their skills and expertise with us, as well as recognising our tenth Honoured Friend.

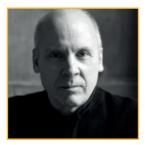
Companions



Jon Burton

Jon is a sound engineer, who has worked at the highest level for over 20 years. He's primarily involved in live sound, with early clients including Radiohead and Ride. Since 2004, he's toured regularly with The Prodigy as their frontof-house engineer and has also toured with Björk, Bryan Ferry and James Morrison among many others. Along with live sound, Jon has worked in broadcasting and recording, his credits include TFI Friday and Later... with Jools Holland and has worked at recording studios

Abbey Road and The Manor. He regularly lectures at universities and colleges and this year completed his MSc in Music Technology at York University.



John Caird

John is a director and writer working in theatre, opera and musical theatre. He has won two Tony Awards with Sir Trevor Nunn, Best Director of a Musical for Les Misérables and Best Director of a Play for The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby, for which they both also received an Olivier Award. John's directed over 20 productions for the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC). While at the National Theatre, his version of Candide received an Olivier Award for Outstanding Musical Production

John is an honorary associate director of the RSC, principal guest director of the Royal Dramatic Theatre, Stockholm and author of Theatre Craft.



Jo Collins

Jo is an ambassador and guardian of Chickenshed, an inclusive theatre company she co-founded with Mary Ward in 1974. Jo is Chickenshed's director of music; composing and arranging music for more than 100 musicals, as well as piano concertos, ballets, incidental music and songs for TV appearances and special commissions. Sir Cliff Richard, Elaine Paige and Bob Hoskins are among those to record her songs. Before Chickenshed, she was a successful singer, who worked for over

ten years on BBC radio sessions. Established for over 40 years, Chickenshed has an international reputation for bringing people together from all backgrounds to create inspirational theatre



Chris Difford

Chris is co-founder of Squeeze, who formed in London in the 1970s and are still recording and performing now. Along with Glenn Tilbrook, Chris was responsible for writing the band's songs with Cool for Cats, Up the Junction and Tempted among their hits. Away from Squeeze, he's written for Elton John, Bryan Ferry and former bandmate Jools Holland. In 2008, he and Glenn were awarded the Outstanding Contribution to British Music award at the Ivor Novellos. Chris had previously won an Ivor

Novello for his lyrics for the film Still Crazy in 1998. This year sees Chris release his fourth studio album and an autobiography.



Jon Driscoll

Jon is a cinematographer, lighting and projection designer working in the West End and Broadway. His West End designs include; The King's Speech, Dirty Dancing and Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, for which he and Paul Pyant were awarded an Olivier Award for Best Lighting Design in 2014. On Broadway Ghost the Musical earnt him and Rob Howell a Drama Desk Award and Tony nomination in 2012. His theatre work includes credits for the National Theatre, The Old Vic and the Almeida.

He's also designed for The Royal Ballet, Santa Fe Opera and Kate Bush's Before the Dawn at the Hammersmith Apollo.



Woody HarrelsonActor Woody first became known to millions of TV viewers as bartender Woody Boyd in the long-running comedy Cheers, winning a Primetime Emmy in 1988. His more recent TV work includes True Detective for which he was nominated for Emmy, SAG and Golden Globe Awards. His film work has seen him shortlisted for two Academy Awards, Best Actor in 1997 for The People vs. Larry Flynt and Best Supporting Actor, 2010, for The Messenger. Most recently, he wrote, directed, produced

and starred in Lost in London, which was filmed and broadcast live. Woody will next be seen in the upcoming Han Solo Star Wars spin-off film.



Kay Hilton

Kay set up KMC Agencies Ltd. in Manchester in 1996 after discovering there was a gap in the market for a casting company specialising in dancers and choreographers. Since then, KMC has worked with West End shows, touring productions, all the major TV channels, fashion and sports shows and supplied dancers for Kylie Minogue, Cher and Eternal among others. Kay trained at the Northern Ballet School and had a successful dance career before moving into choreography and

then starting her company. She is now a qualified teacher, working with universities across the UK and remains director of dance, drama and musical theatre at KMC



Mary Ward
Mary is an ambassador and guardian of Chickenshed, an inclusive theatre company she co-founded with Jo Collins in 1974. Former teacher Mary is Chickenshed's artistic director and has directed over 100 original productions from small-scale dramatic pieces at a variety of venues to large musicals at the Royal Albert Hall. Since its creation, Chickenshed has received support from Dame Judi Dench and Sir Trevor Nunn, while Diana, Princess of Wales, was its Royal Patron. As

well as regular performances, the charity also holds workshops for 900 children a week, while its outreach programme benefits 15,000 young people a year.

Honoured Friend



Tony Wood

Tony is CEO and founder of Buccaneer Media. The production company was set up in 2013 and was behind the programmes Marcella (ITV), Ride (Nickleodeon), and Desi Rascals (Sky1).

Prior to Buccaneer, Tony produced Coronation Street; was executive producer on Channel 4's Hollyoaks and co-created the groundbreaking reality drama series The Only Way is Essex. He was head of continuing series for ITV Network between 2000 and 2003 and network executive for all long form drama. He first connected with

us when he was running Lime Pictures in Liverpool, which led to auditions and castings for our graduates. Since then, he has introduced us to key industry figures, most recently the senior drama commissioner for ITV.

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Thanks to all the graduates and staff who contributed to this edition, including writers Jan Buchanan, Mark Featherstone-Witty and Joe Norman. The opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of the Institute and we reserve the right to edit any material.



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