

Mary Bennett Lighting Design Portfolio 2021



About me – What is Mary B Lighting Design?



A simple answer is to say Mary B Lighting Design is a way for me to explore theatre lighting through conventional and non-conventional means of light. I enjoy liaising with other designers and directors – making the most accurate portrayal of their performance, fitting in with the style of a performance, whilst still allowing myself to come up with some creative lighting choices! I have always enjoyed lighting- starting with my paid work before my training, but it was in the first year of my training at BOVTS that I took a main interest in my designing and programming, just being able to look up at the stage and think: ‘I made this, I created this aesthetic using my own skills.’ Since I decided my specialism, I have worked on my own projects both

during and outside of my training times- as well as being asked to light the extra-curricular activities at BOVTS. I knew this was what I wanted my career to be and I will do *anything* to get there.

Themes

At the beginning of my design process, I thoroughly analyse the script- picking out any recurring motifs/ themes during a performance and working my lighting around these themes, that are the main subject of my lighting design. Most of my work includes a lot of colour, effects and gobos! Following this I take time to research these motifs, create mood-boards, watch videos and create a detailed Q list, allowing me to use recurring ‘specials’ in a show to emphasise these motifs and put dramatic emphasis on a certain part of a story- without necessarily the need of any sound or speech.

Accessibility

I always strive to make my work as accessible as possible. Being hard of hearing myself I understand first-hand how difficult it is to enjoy certain elements of performances without complying to an audiences’ accessibility needs. By not complying to these, you’re turning away a large part of your market, as well as preventing a large number of people from being able to enjoy a show. In my future design work I would like to incorporate creative captioning into performances, working with projection mapping, as well as be able to create an atmosphere through not only my lighting design but through other senses: smell, taste, touch in order for *everyone* to be able to enjoy a show- not just those privileged enough to not have any disability. As well as this, I would love to work purely in theatres with disabled access and seating – as to provide a performance for those with less-able bodies as well as able bodied persons.

Recent Work Whilst Training

Lighting Designer Absolute Scenes

Absolute Scenes was designed specifically for The Marble Factory. Director Tanuja Amarasuriya wanted to use the entirety of the space, creating an experience for the audience in the round so that the audience could feel party of the atmosphere. The show was set at a massive party at the end of the world, using several varied nightclub themes, music and AV, it was a very non-conventional show.



I worked very close with AV designer Ping Clarke-Ng, a massive blow-up sphere was rigged downstage of the truss and was rigged, so that Ping was able to project many different states of the sun/moon before the end of the world. In order to compliment the AV design, I incorporated various LED fixtures into the performance to help create the illusion of whatever

manipulation was being used. One of my favourite states was at the very end state. Ping projected a blue moon onto the sphere. Using open white angled front lighting from the balcony railings, I was able to capture the actors' faces then used blue backlight and side light to fill the stage full of blue.

A completely contrasting state was the orange sun scene, they described the sun getting hotter and hotter. In order to completely fill the space with light, I focused two moving lights onto the ceiling, using a bright orange gobo and zoomed out as much as possible. The light from this refracted, and covered the audience with yellow beams, similar to sunlight. As well as this I wanted to create a very non-naturalistic desert feel, using my Robe pointes, placed downstage of the aisle, I was able to create a hard-edged sun gobo, focusing these on the wall and zooming them out, the gobo stripped down as it was stretched and creating beams of light against the balcony edge, similar to how sunlight looks through a window. Being able to incorporate the audience into the design allowed me to not only create a lighting state, but also an atmosphere to come with this. My aim was to replicate a constant world of different parties, drawing in the audience and making them feel like they're back in a party, pre-COVID.



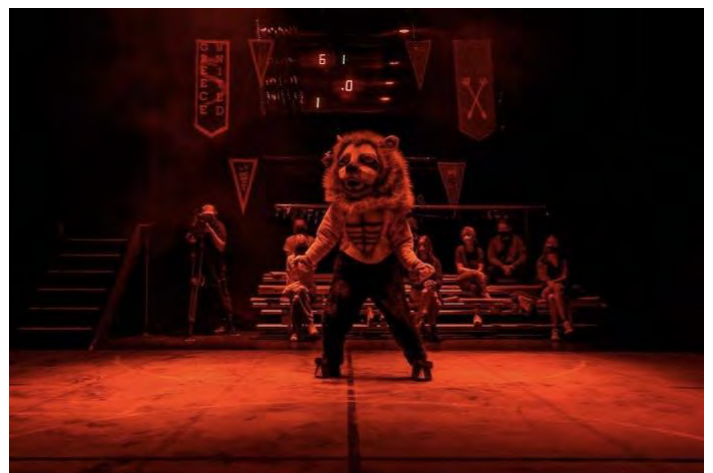
Lighting Designer Troilus And Cressida



Troilus and Cressida was a modern interpretation of Shakespeare based in a high school environment. Our designer, Eliza Podesta based the set design in a high school, with traverse seating- using a set of bleachers as seating for the 'onstage' audience. As well as this, the performance was streamed for a digital audience, I found this challenging as I had to minimise any glare for the camera and prevent blinding the upstage audience. Therefore, I cheated in light angles to have more of a side-

lighted focusing. As well as this, both sides of the war were portrayed as football teams- I was influenced by the team football flags that Eliza had designed so used a recurring football state when the teams were in 'battle' or with any reference of the different sides including the locker rooms.

During transitions in between scenes, we occasionally had a movement, fight or dance sequence. I used a variety of effects during these transitions that complemented the beat of the music. Using central placed hex pars, I could create colourful transitions that contrasted the scenes, creating a complete transformation between the different settings of the performance. As well as this I used moving lights to capture certain parts of the movement. During one dance sequence, there was a drag queen reveal, where I had to do a 3-part follow-on of a mover, this took precise timings but I learnt a lot about how to control follow-ons/ hangs more accurately!



During the death scene, the actors had a slow-motion sequence. For this sequence I used strobe lighting to add a dramatic effect. As the tension built, the strobe added suspense as the audience were unsure about the entire picture. In a very broken fashion, you could see the characters fall to the floor. After this, I snapped back into the previous cue, showing the result of the battle. Another fixture I used for effect was a mirror ball. This was perfect for the prom sequence and as well as the stage it projected

the beams all around the audience.

Lighting Designer: Far From The Madding Crowd

Far From The Madding Crowd was the first lighting design credit at BOVTS. I worked alongside director: Paul Chesterton and designer: Max Dorey who made a cloudy sky backdrop that I was able to manipulate with LED's to create a completely different time, season and atmosphere. Here is an example of the morning sunrise at the start of the show. →



As well as this, I had a lot of set pieces to play with. The hut in the show was used for actors to have scenes in, climb upon and hold properties for other



scenes. I played with the different angled lighting on this hut to create dramatic shadowing as well as portraying where the sun was early/ late in the daytime. I also had a floor LED parcan behind the tree, this came in hand especially during a fire scene where I added a red colour and effect to make the tree look like it was on fire!

One of my favourite scenes to be creative on was the drowning movement sequence. I watched this through several times and timed the sequence, flooding the stage with different blue shades and adding a gobo with an effect to replicate a moving water feel. Then over the time period of the movement sequence I gradually made the blue shades deeper and deeper- similar to the deeper shades you get as you dive deeper into the sea. Before swiftly fading into the next scene as the actor's finished the sequence.



One of the recurring motifs I found on the show was the theme of **death**. With the death of 3 main characters and a dog in the show, I knew I wanted to emphasise this motif in the show as well as creating an intense silhouetted transition for actors to get into the next scene! I put the floor LED battens in a deep red, whilst the rigged profiles with cyclorama scoops were in a deep blue/ purple making an intense sunset. With just the backdrop covered and no additional front or

sidelight this created a silhouette making the moment very intense but the transition smooth.

Assistant Lighting Designer: Hedda

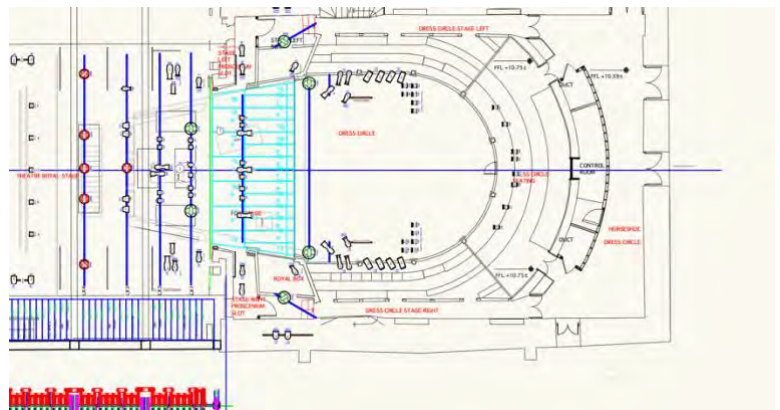
Hedda was my second Assistant Lighting Designer credit at BOVTS. I felt more involved in this show in terms of the lighting design due to having an extra year's experience as well as being able to take my own time to research and learn the CAD programme: Vectorworks in order to aid the Lighting designer: Mike Gunning as best as I possibly could. Hedda was set in the same room throughout the whole show, with the only difference being the time change. Working with Mike, I learnt the importance of back-light in order to create an accurate portrayal of the sun and how the sun or moon creates shadowing through windows- making Mike's portrayal of the time change as accurate to Designer: Bronia Housman and director : Jenny Stephen's vision as possible!



Hedda Gabler was a very troubled individual- eating the USB with a very important script. This was a long monologue with just Hedda onstage and situated right before an interval. To highlight this crucial moment of the play, Mike used a harsh, hard-edged , top-light profile spot and stripped down the cover of the rest of the furniture. I found this amazing how such a minimalistic use of light enabled Mike to shift focus so easily during Hedda's monologue.



I love shadowing and working alongside Mike. My main responsibility during this show was to manage the lighting plan and keep it up to date. Without prior knowledge of Vectorworks I took a week of training to focus on learning Vectorworks inside and out! This is also a very useful skill to use for other shows so I thought if I took the time to learn this, it would prove worth it. I received a CAD file from Bronia with the theatre top-view and her set design , so I had to add another layer on top of this with my lighting bars and the design that myself and Mike had discussed about ! I also updated the dimmer, channel and DMX numbers as instructed to make sure the programmer and Mike were up to speed with the lights , this quickened up the technical rehearsals and minimalised errors made.



Creating lighting for both stage and screen prepared me for future lighting designs focusing on camera. We had to increase the intensity of the lights for camera and manipulate and edit other lights for the different camera angles to create a similar image on screen to that on stage.

Lighting Programmer and Operator: The Laramie Project

Although I didn't do the lighting design for The Laramie Project, I loved working alongside Jenny Roxborough to create her lighting vision for the show. Jenny is a professional ETC programmer, programming is a massive part of every show and I have taken a large interest to it because I feel that if you have good knowledge on programming you can communicate and work better with your team! As well as being able to programme your own designs if need be. Carly Brownbridge's projection design was stunning, and it was amazing to learn how electricians and projection can work alongside each other to create a beautiful thought-provoking show like this.



Jenny taught me a lot during the technical rehearsal process including how to create absolute effects and how the use of hazers can intensify an atmosphere. During a media scene – we created an absolute effect where the side lighting flashed similarly to that of a camera, this created an emphasised media atmosphere for the whole audience to feel as though they were in the moment, in comparison to using a literal camera flash that would've created less of an atmosphere separating the audience from the story. As well as this Jenny used squared off spots to isolate actors and scenes. This taught me not only about the effects for lighting but how shapes of light beams can really effect the feel of a scene.

Lighting Programmer and Operator Nicholas-Nickleby Part 1

Nick-nick was my first show I programmed at BOVTS. This was the show that convinced me to pursue a career in lighting design. I worked alongside Lighting Designer: Rob Casey to create an atmosphere full of different emotions through the lighting complementing the action of the show. The main influence I took from this show was the use of colour. I had a whole LED wall to control, allowing us to create any time of day/ any sky / any setting wanted. As well as learning the basics of an ETC lighting board I was able to experience first-hand the relationship within the lighting department and how a show worked with all the different departments.



I found out that by playing with the intensity of the colours, this was able to differ the shade of colour throughout the LED wall being able to create the most beautiful sunsets and sunrises. For example: take the colour **RED** and put the intensity of the LED wall from 20% through to 80% and this will fade through different intensities of red and produce a sunset. Also by using one intensity of one colour, it was a very bold move and we used this mainly to create a setting instead of a sky for example this theatre setting we used a block red colour to stand for the royal red of the theatre curtain.

I loved the amount of freedom I had with the colour creativity of this backdrop and I have both Rob Casey and BOVTS to thank for this!

Assistant Lighting Designer Snow Queen

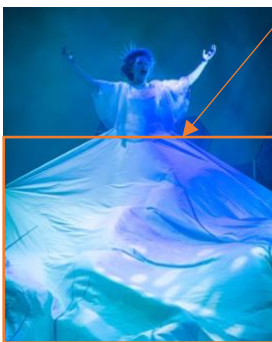
After Nick-nick, I became more and more curious about Lighting Design for theatre. Snow Queen was a musical children's winter show that BOVTS performed in the Redgrave theatre! I wanted to know how Lighting Designer: Joe Stathers would manipulate the lighting to follow movement and song as well as how he would be creating the famous Northern Lights that were created in the performance through lights. As well as other work I was doing at BOVTS, I created a project for myself to do my own design for this show! Furthermore, Joe Stathers invited me to be the Assistant Lighting Designer for this project so I could learn more about the performance and about lighting design!



My favourite part of this design process was being able to play with different lights and materials in order to create the Northern lights. Using a reflective, silver piece of cardboard and an LED lustr, we angled the cardboard to shine onto the cyclorama and create so many different shapes with a green beam of light, accurately portraying the patterns and colour of Northern lights. Even though this method was not used in the show, it was just a fun chance to be able to manipulate and play with light and I can't wait to have more time to experiment like this again. In the actual show Joe used an LED batten in green with a wave patterned effect in different times, creating a Northern light illusion on the walls of the icy set Snow Queen used.



A difficult part of lighting the set was that it was



completely blue, making all the scenes look blue so through experimentation, Joe used a various amount of different colour to cancel out the blue and often stripped-down cover during scenes to highlight the properties and actors instead of the set so

much, until we got to the Ice castle! Heloise's dress was white which was the perfect canvas for light as it allows us to see the true colour within all the blue set. Snow Queen also allowed me to create a Q list to analyse the script thoroughly! This was my very first show Q list and my Q lists have developed since then as I know exactly what I would like to use to create an effect, not just the effect I would like to use. I'm very glad I got to take part in Snow Queen as it was my very first insight into Lighting Design and I enjoyed the whole creative process!

LX Cue	Page	Time up/down	Prompt/ stage action	LX action	Notes
Q 0.5	5	0	Presets	House lights, Dim white (cold) wash over stage, Gobos centre stage, Spot on snowflake at back and drum riser,	
Q1	5	5	Clearance	Presets dims to blackout	Give complete
Q2	5	3	Blackout	Dim wash downstage, cold from lighting over 'books'	No colour on sky screens until sing ends
Q3	5	2	Book 1 in place	Spot on book 1	
Q4	5	2	Book 2 in place	Spot on book 2	
Q5	5	2	Book 3 in place	Spot on book 3	
Q6	5	3	Chorus sing	Spots on books fade and wash brightens to see chorus	
Q7	5	2	Gerda sings SR	Warm front light on Gerda	
Q8	5	6	Drum riser moves upstage.	Upstage wash dims	
Q8.5	5	4	Once upon a moment ends	Sky fades to an orange colour (sunrise) Warm wash fills stage.	
Q9	5	2	Soren starts singing.	Spot on Soren	
Q10	6	2	Chorus skate onstage	Spots fades, wash % increases, Side light?	
Q11	6	1	Karen and friends sing	Shuttered /mover over Karen and friends	
Q11.5	6	1	Soren and friends sing	Shuttered /mover over Soren and friends	
Q12	7	2	All sing together	Snowflake gobos/ similar pattern spins on 'ice'.	
Q13	7	1	Song ends	Gobos fade out, state dims	Give complete
Q14	7	3	Comete from Q13	State over RX and SS gets brighter	

Work out of training /Extra Curricular

Light It in Red



Light it in Red was an event that BOVTS took part in with the majority of live-event sectors/ entertainment sectors/ theatres and theatre schools. This was to support the live events industry because due to COVID-19 a lot of events industries have been under funded and not able to go on. To support *We Make Events*, myself and two colleagues lit the theatre school foyer in red and got the *We make events* logo up on the monitors in the foyer.

This was completely different to lighting a show as we had to light a whole room and make it seen from the outside. To do this, we used all LED's as we had a time limit to rig and programme! Using hex pars angled towards the ceiling, we found these beams bounced from the ceiling into the space, filling the room with red. We then used LED battens to evenly fill the back wall of the foyer. This allowed it to stand out from the outside. Finally, we used a red gel to cover the outside light and this helped to create the illusion that the foyer was completely red!

LGBTQ+ Evening

This LGBTQ+ evening was a montage of different songs and scenes from students celebrating the LGBTQ+ represented artists, writers, and creatives in the industry as well as the LGBTQ+ community at the theatre school.

Without having any rehearsal, I had to programme lights able to be busked for whatever the act. As general coverage in the room I made a cold and warm cover using S4 Lustrs. The wall of the studio was black and considering one of the main representations of LGBTQ+ is their flag, I used 5 LED battens to cover the wall full of light each in a different colour in the order of the colours on the flag. I then parked these battens throughout the whole performance so that the only lights that would change would be the coverage. At the end of the evening, everyone got up to dance so I used a rainbow effect on the Lustrs to create a disco colourful dance feel!



1st Year Actor's BA Song and dance

This was my first outside training hours lighting design project I did for the drama school. For this project there was a montage of different songs from different musical theatre shows.

Unfortunately, we were rushed with the programming, therefore not everything was perfect in the performance, but I could see after how much I would improve!



For example, I needed to work out the capacity of lights that the touring rack was able to take, the rack kept on tripping that could've been dangerous! Also, I found most of the design very orange, next time I will make sure to only use colour when necessary and to use more natural warm gels and open white for a more natural coverage! It also showed the importance of a lighting designer going into a rehearsal before rigging the lights, go look at the blocking and positions of the movement and to make sure that none of the lighting fixtures are in the way of the actors at all! This would have been useful because our LED battens were too close to the wall, so their beams were small and looked splodgy.



Artist Development Showcase (AD4)

Access to Music Norwich asked me to be part of the Artist Development Showcase and do the lighting design for Lewis Riches' set. Lewis had 10 minutes to present his music to a panel of industry professionals, so it was important that the lighting complemented his music.

Pre-performance I met up with Lewis and discussed what he wanted from his set: He told me that he wanted to be

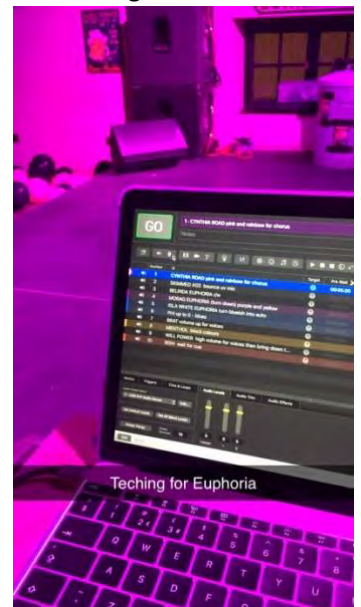
anonymous and his music was electronic and featured other artists. As his music was made up of a lot of instrumentals, I played with Mac250's on floor stands with Gobo's. One of his set pieces was called 'grow' so I played with a plant looking gobo and added a rotating effect. I bumped this onto a fader so that when the song got to the chorus, I would push up the fader and the Mac's would rotate around the room, just like a plant growing. Although I did have a spot on Lewis, I took it out after his panel questions as he wants to remain anonymous and highlighted his guest singer: Ginny Dix, more.

The green beams were used in performance due to Lewis' logo being green, a challenge during the set was to make sure the beams did not hit the projection screen so that Lewis' logo could be seen throughout the whole performance, as well as this he created an animation for one of the songs.

Euphoria

Euphoria was a drag night set in a pub. I got approached by one of the drag queens asking to be the technical operator during the show. I went for a recce at the venue and found that they have an LED rig which was controlled through a tablet. This rig only had certain effects that could be used so I matched the timing of these effects to the songs used for each drag queen. Most of the drag performers had specific lighting requirements which I took note of including colour schemes and when in the songs/performances they wanted specific effects or blackout.

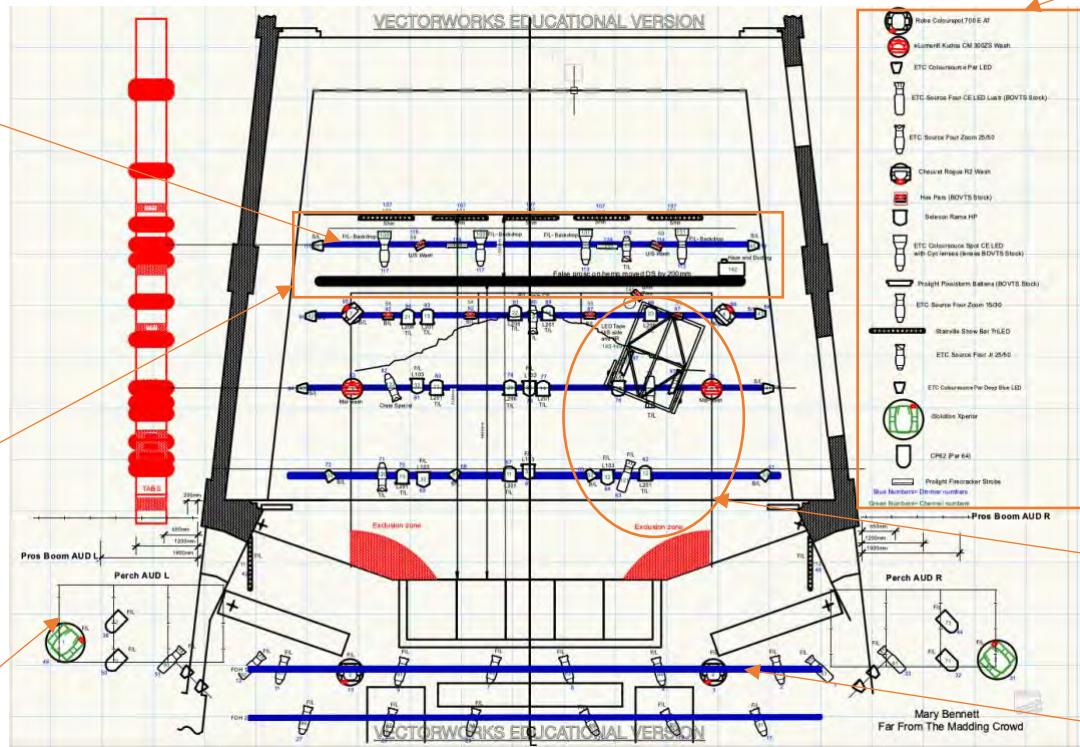
As well as this I got to use Qlab to operate the different tracks that the drag artists wanted. This was very useful for future shows and a very useful skill to have. I learnt a lot from the Euphoria, including having to work around a set rig and group of effects I can use. This show also gave me a lot of patience as the owners of the venue were very sexist, so it was good to prove that a woman can work tech by herself! It also gave me motivation to continue to develop my skillset and prepare myself for working with similar people in the future, as well as having more confidence in myself and to not believe what people say, knowing my worth.



Vectorworks Lighting Plans

Below are two different lighting plans I have worked on recently using Vectorworks 2021. I got the theatre CAD designs and set designs from the designers: Max Dorey and Bronia Housman and added my lighting design on top to make the lighting plan as accurate as possible. As well as adding a fixture key, I added a channel/ dimmer number key on the plan so that whoever was using the lighting plan for reference could understand how fixtures were rigged and through what channel number they are to be programmed.

Far From The Madding Crowd- The Redgrave Theatre Set Design: Max Dorey



Key

I made sure there was angled coverage and specials over the hut as this was a main point of focus throughout most of the scenes : especially the split scenes.

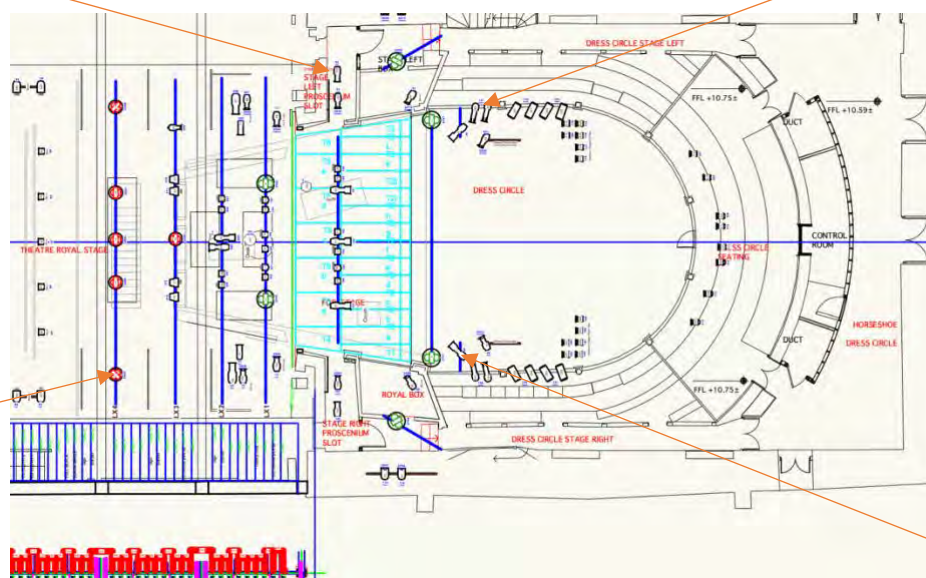
Lighting Bars:
LX4 was moved onto a tab track as LX4 was being used for the backdrop

This US area was my working space to light the back drop , the rigged lanterns were also used to highlight the mound area DS of the backdrop

Ladders

FOH LX bars

Hedda- Bristol Old Vic Set Design: Bronia Housman



Mike wanted some profiles focused onto the pillars as a 'special' these were used as an interesting transition before scenes and also reminding they are in a theatre separating them from the show

The footlights in the auditorium were used when Hedda had her monologue, this allowed the top-light spot to still have a harsh effect on stage whilst allowing the cameras to still pick up her face

Scrollers were put in the proscenium slots. The scrollers had various gels controlled through the lighting board with the scroller being DMX controlled and the lantern being a generic.

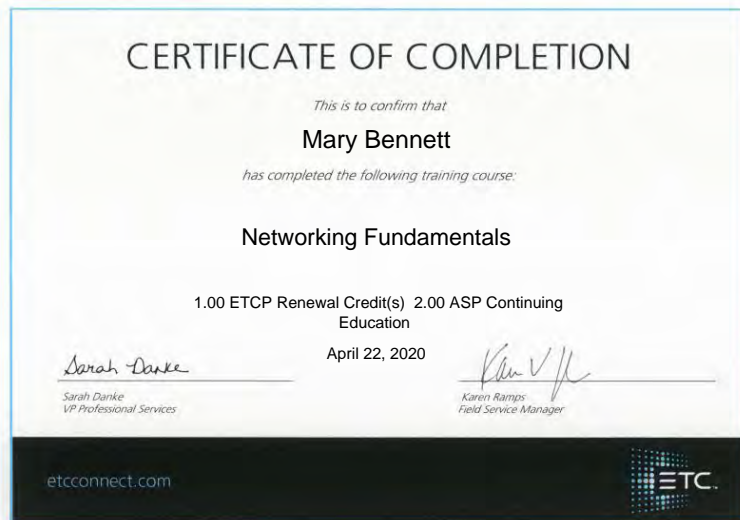
Backlight using VL's was added to the US bars to represent moonlight/sunlight in the show.

Certificates



Completed in April 2020, this DMX course gave me a closer insight into what to do if the DMX inside a theatre is not working and solving both physical and electrical DMX issues.

Upon working online, I wanted to have a deeper understanding of networking in ETC consoles to understand why our consoles may have networking issues and why our consoles and visualisers struggled to connect up and work together.



In my current work on the show *20K Leagues Under The Sea*, I have also undergone my own project to create a mock-up of what the lighting for the show would've been. Alongside this I have taken a course on ETC's new visualiser *Augment3d*. This course has allowed me to learn the basics for Augmented and start playing with a mock-up of the ACTA centre's theatre space as well as adding Maria Terry's design and my own lighting design into the space too, allowing me to have a visual representation of what the show could've looked like if it was done in the real space and not on Zoom.



Current courses being worked on

- ETC course: EOS Family consoles (levels 1-4)
- St John's Academy Course: MCQ Online electrician course
- St John's Academy Course: BSL levels 1-2

Other Training Acquired (Please see accompanying CV)

- First Aid Training
- Truss and Telescope Training
- IOSHH training

Gallery

Tech Rehearsals for Hedda



Focusing the battens for Madding Crowd



Testing LED tape for the Madding Crowd hut



Focusing hut specials for Madding Crowd



Nick-Nick LED wall



Programming the ETC Gio@5 for The Laramie Project



Playing With gobos for The Laramie Project

