

Lighting Workshop

On 31st January a great crowd of us turned up at the Commemoration Hall for our long-awaited Lighting Workshop. Now I'm fairly new to the whole acting lark so the goings on of the lighting crew have always been shrouded in mystery for me and I was looking forward to learning all about it.

There were two parts to the evening. First, Adam – from Stage Electrics, the source of most of the lighting equipment that we hire – demonstrated some lights that could be programmed to rotate, change colour, flash and do everything except get up and dance. This was particularly interesting for the old lighting pros among us.

Then John Morgan, who's been doing sound and lighting for the Club for 20 years, introduced the lighting virgins to the basics. Where the lighting bars were and what the different kinds of lights were used for. Luckily for me he put it all into plain English so I didn't make an idiot of myself by asking daft questions (well, no more daft than usual!).

But then suddenly to our great delight he allowed us all on stage to actually touch the lights, attach them to a lighting bar and play with focusing and directing them. Carol even volunteered to winch a lighting bar down from the lofty heights of the stage ceiling (which she did with great aplomb). Suddenly it all started to make sense as we could see the lights in action. I had thought that spotlights followed actors around the stage (what a fool!) and I certainly hadn't realised the limitations that the lighting crew work with (it's basically on, off or fade for each set of lights).

Now, of course I'm an impossible show-off with my new-found knowledge of Fresnels, Barn Doors, Gobos and Profile Lanterns. I'd even like to have a go sometime (if they can prise me away from being in a spotlight to pointing it at someone else!). And I know John had offers of assistance from others on the night, which bodes well for all of us who are keen to see John liberated from the lighting desk and back on stage sometime soon.

It was a terrific evening and I know everyone I spoke to found it fascinating. Let's have more of the same – I think most people in the drama club (not to mention all the non-members who turned up) would like to know more about the backstage elements of putting on a production. Oh, and if you missed it, John's excellent booklet is available on the website and contains everything you could ever want to know.

After that taster, John's now thinking of running a half-day course that would give people enough knowledge and experience to light a production, so if you're interested, do contact him (john.morgan@vodafone.net).

John, you have enlightened us, illuminated the subject and, dare I say, tripped the light fantastic!

Caroline Harbord