

them and not all from one manufacturer. It is good in a way because we can actually say to a student lighting designer, 'well, have you considered using a Harmony with...' and you have got it all here.'

As you might expect, there is no such thing at RADA as a typical day. But the general pattern of life for students is one of lectures and shows. If

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they are not learning, for example, how to light a particular type of production, then they are putting their learning into practice.

She explained, 'When we have outside lighting designers coming in, they may give a standard lecture on how and why they lit a show in a particular way, or their relationship with the director and what it meant to them in lighting terms.'

'That works quite well and it also gives an added dimension. It is often a problem when you have a variety of people saying, 'well, actually, yes, we agree'.

'It consolidates what we are saying. Otherwise we might get very narrow in what we are teaching. There certainly isn't a RADA way...there is a professional way of lighting.'

Students are received into RADA on a merit system of enthusiasm, dedication, and previous theatre experience, so that at the very least, they understand the 'who does what' hierarchy of a theatre company.

'But really it is how they are which matters,' Christine said. 'It is such a personality orientated business that they have got to be able to come in and to get on with people.'

'You can be the best board operator in the world or the best lighting designer. But unless you can communicate with others, you are lost.'

Christine's own way into RADA came via Clywd Youth Theatre in Mold, North Wales, a BA in Theatre Studies at the University of Kent, stage management and a deputy post as electrician at The Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith. When the RADA vacancy arose, she was selected for the job.

Now aged 27, she has been at the Academy for two and a half years but maintains her professional 'eye' by freelance

lighting design assignments for companies such as The Dance Studio. She is currently working towards a Master of Philosophy qualification.

She went on, 'The good thing about it is that I can go into a lecture, having just done a show somewhere and say, 'well, recently I did this...' and I am sure it gives what I am saying more credibility.'

However, they found that 'the American way' was not all they expected.

'They discovered that in the United States, they do a lot of theory but do not always have the practical aspect to see if the theories work.'

'What we say at RADA is something like "go and create a moonscape", having discussed what they may need to do.'



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Students are themselves urged to keep in touch with the 'real world' of stage lighting, by taking-in as many West End and provincial shows as they can manage — sometimes under strict orders to observe a certain aspect of lighting, ready for a lecture-hall discussion the following day.

Another aspect on lighting came recently for two specialist students who had completed their RADA course. They were selected to go to Yale University, in the USA, to study lighting under Jennifer Tipton.

'Learning is always much better if you discover certain things for yourself. You need the practical experience to enable you to develop.'

'We are teaching on the basis that we manipulate them to learn certain things and we are pulling them into certain areas, where we hope they will make some discoveries of their own and feel they have achieved something.'

And what can the successful student expect at the end of the course? Continual assessment of project work leads ultimately to a RADA Diploma. After which, for the new generation of lighting designers, all the world's a stage.