

Q&A for Webinar - Lighting University - Designing for Live TV and Events

March 28th 2018.

Q: What principles do you use to develop your designs?

A>> I get so much from seeing a set design and visuals, talking to the designer and using what I know from experience will work.

Q: What program are your plans drafted in?

A>> I use WYSIWYG.

Q: How does the set dressing light fit into your design?

Do you have control of it and do you set the overall look and feel ?

A>> I generally have a huge amount of control, in some situations I make sure of that. It's the designer who will come up with the set concept on most programmes but all are willing for my input and some ask for it.

Q: Many TV shows, sports programs and TV news use a full blue colour as background. Do you think it is a sort of "modern" style or a specific need for new tele cameras?

A>> Blue is always a great color to back flesh tones and gives great depth

Q: What are all your thoughts on the EU proposal that may see the end/ban of more traditional tungsten light sources - amongst others - within the entertainment industry?

A>> I did answer this in the seminar, I totally disagree with EU getting involved in our creative field especially as tungsten is still the most beautiful creative tool.

Q: What does ND stand for?

A>> Neutral density, have a look at leefilters.com references 209, 210, 211 to reduce light by 1,2, or 3 stops.

Q: What is your opinion on fixed colour temp fixtures or tuneables?

A>> Always tuneable, so much good variation and you can pick exactly where you want it to be.

Q: How do you mimic natural light, such as in the apprentice?

A>> By adjusting the color temperature of the camera and or lights, the cooler the outside is perceived on camera the more it looks like daylight. If the camera setting are set to tungsten.

Q: In South Africa they use on The Voice and Dancing with the Stars, the new Var-Lite VLZ, Is there any regulations on basic design of a show when it is broadcasted in multiple countries?

A>> I haven't come across any regulations. Worldwide show brands like The Voice, Dancing, Xfactor, Talent etc have a production bible where all department heads add their plans, equipment lists and advice. It's a guide on the look, not 100% meant to be absolutely copied around the world, and as LDs were free to use what we want to create that look.

Q: In stage lighting automation, what types of technology you generally use, DMX or others?

A>> By stage automation do you mean in lighting terms or actual set / props automation? I generally use DMX / ardent.

Q: Why use tungsten? Is the LED not suitable?

A>> Tungsten light is still the best quality, LEDs are getting far brighter and much better now but are so expensive compared to tungsten.

Q: Which brands LED products do you use in your projects?

A>> Mac Auras, some Chauvet, some SGM,

Q: What consoles do you normally work with?

A>> When programming I always used compulite, mainly vector. Slightly dated now and not keeping up with the likes of MA.

Q: What advice do you have for students interested in lighting for film and TV?

A>> Make contact with someone you have details for, ask their opinion, you can gain so much from talking to someone face to face and seeing how a TV environment works and differs from theatre / live events. If you are passionate enough about it follow it up.

Q: What is your view on the rapid change to the focus on high CRI TLCI, where we used CRI70 in the past?

A>> Advancements are great and going in the right direction most CRI these days in professional use seems to be well over 90%

Q: How do I get the chance to work in the department of Lighting Design of Live TV?

A>> To desing will take some time, but contact some people working in it, ask to chat to them, arrange to mneet have a look around, ask if theres any work experience etc its so much right place right time now, also if you know any lighting techs from hire companies etc if you get in with the right people oportunites will arise and you may get small shows to program.

Q: Is TV lighting design a dying trade?

A>> Not at all, I think its nore important than ever with the advancements in technology it's still so vital as a bridge between production and design.

Q: Do you think the style of lighting for television is changing again? (You mentioned the change from the more muted to the more saturated), and if so, How?

A>> camera technology has helped, they are so much more sensitive to light and color now than used to be. Styles are always evolving, nothing really very new except LEDs there is so much happening.

Q: How do you qualify LED lighting for on-camera flicker? Are there standards you use, or is it necessary to test lighting with specific cameras?

A>> Always test if you can and use professional products, all the big names will test for flicker in their R&D and it wont happen. Make sure tho that cameras are set to standard 50hz and nothing odd with camera shutters.

Q: What is your creative process? What kind of software do you use to design? WYSOWYG, vector works etc?

A>> Wysiwyg for me it's fast accurate it has its faults but so do many other things! I am just used to it and enjoy it.

Q: Any pointers to achieve a clean look on screen? And dealing with haze etc?

A>> I try to avoid haze if possible if not use haze not smoke, and a fan with the hazer to make the haze more even. The buildings ventilation will have an effect on the evenness too so look into this and make sure it doesn't change during the shows, this is really frustrating from getting a very even look to it becoming very uneven!

Q: Do you have any advice for someone trying to get back into the theatrical world after being out of it for 4+ years?

A>> Make contact with previous contacts, if they are still involved. If not explore new names, you've had the experience which is what counts.

Q: Are you applying theatrical effects to more architectural projects? If so, please comment?

A>> I always like to be theatrical when it suits, I love the smallest details and try to incorporate as much as I can into a project

Q: How would an operator get 'through the door' with an already existing lighting team, when so many other operators and personalities are also looking for work?

A>> Make contact, get to speak to someone face to face, sell your self, theres not a huge amount of programmers in our world and LDs are looking for more all the time

Q: Have you had problems of flicker from LEDs?

A>> Occasionally especially when using not such professional products and with LEDs cheap controllers. Make sure the cameras are set correctly too.

Q: Is there a special technique that you use to minimize the shadowing behind the subject?

A>> It will always be there so we have to live with it, a white floor is never ideal and careful lighting will limit the nastyness of shadows, for us in Tv too camera angles help, ie not looking down at the floor too much, although for entertainment a clean shadow from say a follow spot I love

Q: Do you think that being a good console operator is going to be the main route to becoming a Lighting Director in the future?

A>> Yes absolutely you learn so much and are sometimes actually the LDs eyes when he is on the studio floor setting lights, its invaluable experience

Q: How to avoid flickering LED images on video camera?

A>> Professional lighting products tested properly by manufacturers and making sure the camera is set up correctly then you will be fine.

Q: How do you imagine event lighting 10 years from now? What kind of disruptive techniques do you foresee?

A>> Apart from advances in H&S and the people who have always tried to prevent us doing our job in the safe way we always do I think its looking good for the future, decreases in bugdgets too maybe not good and Brexit might be difficult.

Q: For your set designs, do you find the dramatic contrast of bright lighting with black space is quite effective and best value?

A>> If it suits then absolutely yes, contrast is great and a major part of a visual look, smoke can add to or detract from that effect too given the circumstances.

Q: What do you think about wireless DMX (lumen radio, wireless solution) in TV shows or you don't recommend wireless at all. Any prefered solution?

A>> W-DMX I have used a few times especially on location for fixtures that's arent easily accessible. It wirks well, it's the only one ive used but I have reservations in TV of using a whole wireless system especially from desk to fixtures.