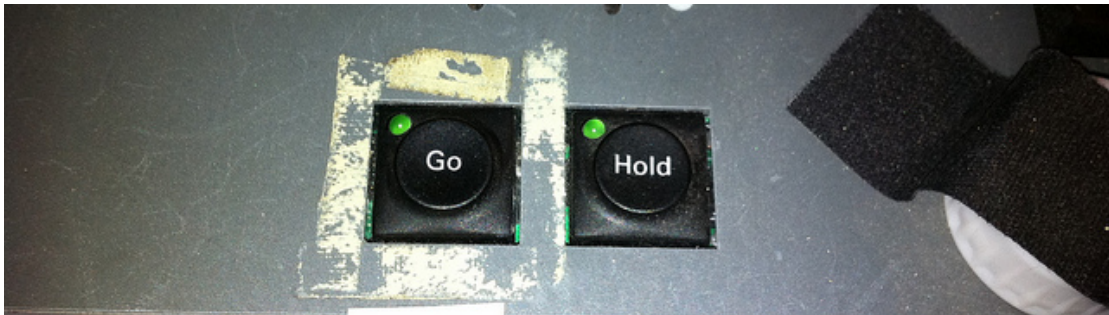The Technologies in Performance Research Hub

at

Rose Bruford College

invites members of the Association of British Theatre Technicians to

Ten Fingers and Two Feet: the future of theatre lighting control

Today's automated lighting enables an unprecedented degree of control over light on stage, with a large lighting system having many thousands of parameters that must be set and adjusted. Lighting consoles now offer highly sophisticated interfaces to allow the user to programme and edit the data in the lighting system, while the erstwhile role of the lighting operator has transformed into that of the programmer. However, come opening night, the matter of lighting control is often reduced to the press of a single 'go' button. So,

- Have lighting consoles become too complicated, emphasising data editing and management over the creative and expressive use of light by an artist?
- Is the programmer a neutral conduit for the lighting designer's creative ideas, or half of an artistic collaboration, or an obstacle between the lighting artist and her material – light?
- Do we put too much emphasis on 'design' – a creative process *in advance* of the performance – and not enough on how light can respond and contribute to the particular *moment* in performance?
- What might the theatre and live music and events worlds learn from each other?

Fred Bentham – one of the most influential voices in stage lighting technology through the middle years of the twentieth century – once said that the lighting operator has ten fingers and two feet, and should be expected to use them. It is time now to point a finger at the go button, and call it and all that surrounds it into question. What should be the future of theatre lighting control?

The Event

The event is in three parts:

1. **Provocation**: a short introduction to research undertaken by Nick Hunt, investigating how the roles of the lighting designer and lighting operator might be combined into the Lighting Artist – a performer who rehearses and performs the lighting with the other performers in the company. Nick will also briefly outline some approaches to human-machine interfaces that might provoke a rethink of lighting control.

2. **Workshop**: a hands-on exploration of two theatre lighting control systems designed to be performed on and with: Fred Bentham's 1935 'Light Console' and Nick Hunt's 2010 'Theolux'.

3. **Discussion Panel**: a discussion of the questions and issues identified above, with a panel of lighting professionals with plenty to say on the topic: Nick Archdale (co-founder of Flying Pig Systems and now Technical Director of Pharos Controls), Andy Collier (editor of the ALD journal *Focus*), Rob Halliday and Andy Voller (both lighting designers and programmers for theatre and events).

Time and Place

Tuesday 9th April, at Rose Bruford College

11.00	Coffee
11.30	Provocation followed by Q&A
12.30	Workshop
1.30	Lunch
2.30	Discussion Panel
4.00	Close

The event is open to RBC staff and students, members of the Association of Lighting Designers and the Association of British Theatre Technicians, and invited guests.

Spaces are limited, so to book you place,

RSVP to Nick Hunt: nick.hunt@bruford.ac.uk

The event is part of the College's annual Symposium – a week of performances, workshops, master classes and forums. Those attending the above event are welcome to stay on for other Symposium activities on the day.