

note pad

Items 275 - 280

December 2018

275 Seamless audio description – the Nottingham way

The excellence of Nottingham Theatre Royal and Royal Concert Hall's access provision has long been a byword among audio describers, so it comes as no surprise to hear that TRCH recently won an Inclusive Tourism Award for its accessibility. Our congratulations to Emily Malen, the venue's Front of House Manager responsible for Access Development (shown here at the awards ceremony) and all the theatre staff to whose team effort she attributed TRCH's success.



<https://trch.co.uk/theatre-royal-royal-concert-hall-wins-prestigious-inclusive-tourism-and-hospitality-award/>

At ADA's professional development session last September, Emily and her colleague Mike Donoghue, Head of Lighting and Sound, gave an inspirational account of the meticulous, day-to-day, interdepartmental planning that ensures the smooth delivery of TRCH's audio description service. The focus throughout is on the individual user, and participants were more than impressed by Mike's willingness to reposition an infrared radiator in order to improve reception for a listener (though, as he said, preferably not five minutes before the show was due to start!)



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Their presentation also covered the role of Box Office and the development of the Access Register which underpins the venue's access provision. Users are issued with a plastic card (pictured left) on registration which automatically links to their requirement profile and triggers the appropriate operational response when presented at point of booking.

Emily and Mike are happy to share their experience of developing a working model for access provision. To contact Emily, please email: emily.malen@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

276 Staging the audio describer



For anyone interested in integrated audio description, Louise Fryer's article *Staging the describer: an exploration of integrated audio description*, published in *Disability Studies Quarterly* earlier this year, is recommended reading.

The author's comparison of traditional and integrated audio description is based on her own involvement as a describer with an integrated audio description project carried out by Unscene Suffolk, a small community theatre company for blind adults based in Ipswich, as the company worked on the development of a new play (*A Zimmer of Hope* set in a fictional nursing home) under the leadership of director Jenni Elbourne. The article also refers to interviews with theatre professionals undertaken as part of a research project into integrated access conducted by Extant, Britain's leading performing arts company of visually impaired people.

Staging the describer is published in Vol. 38, No. 3 of *Disability Studies Quarterly*, and can be read in full on the journal's website at: www.dsqsds.org

More information about Unscene Suffolk can be found on the company's website at: www.unscenesuffolk.co.uk

Also available online is Louise Fryer's more recent article on integrated AD, *The independent audio describer is dead: long live audio description*, published in Vol. 1, No. 1 of the *Journal of Audiovisual Translation* last November. Any traditional audio describers dismayed by the title can take heart from the final sentence of the article's abstract: *Using data from research projects developed by Extant ... and from the European research project ADLAB PRO, this paper concludes that a describer's skills and competencies are still required even with the evolution of integrated AD.*

Read the full text of *The independent describer is dead* on the journal's website at: www.jatjournal.org

277 Christmas with Mind's Eye

The Mind's Eye Christmas Elf (pictured below in a pointy red hat and bearing a striking resemblance to Anne Hornsby) is back this year with a rhyming guide to the festive season.



Christmas is a-coming,
Festive shows arriving fast;
Scouse Cinders is the first this year,
The Snow Queen is the last.

Most popular this year by far,
Is the panto Cinderella -
Lose your sparkly slipper love,
To help you find your fella.

Les Dennis, Connor McIntyre,
Shannon Glynn and Gareth Gates
Will star in Cinders at the Opera House
Make sure you save the date!

Brian Conley and Gok Gwan
Will lead the cast in Bristol,
Whilst Tom Parker is Prince Charming
To Llandudno's Princess Crystal.

Nativity The Musical
With its sparkle and its shine,
Is at the Regent Theatre Stoke
Early Christmas time.

Starring at Wolverhampton Grand,
Are Debbie McGee and Sooty,
Doreen Tipton's also back, -
For this year's Sleeping Beauty.

At the Duke's, if you're very lucky,
You'll meet Peter Pan;
And at the Salford Lowry,
Dr Dolittle and The Stick Man.

Shane Ritchie is our Robin Hood
Down in Milton Keynes,
With the Acromaniacs,
Creating acrobatic scenes.

Steven Roberts is the good guy
Rik Makarem is the bad un,
At Norwich Theatre Royal
In their panto of Aladdin.

Bradford's also got Aladdin
With the comic Billy Pearce,
His jokes are always funny,
Though he's told them all for years!

The Wizard of Oz is alive and well
In both Chester and Bolton;
Join us along the yellow brick road,
Click those heels and you'll be gone!

Christmas Carol is on in Liverpool
Shrek is on in Leeds;
Another Robin Hood, this time in Stoke
There's everything you need!

Beauty and The Beast in Keswick,
The Rise and Fall of Little Voice
Dirty Dancing, The Producers
We give you so much choice!

So get yourselves a booking
For audio description and touch tours,
And may the magic of the theatre
Bring joy to you and yours!

Full details of AD performances on the Mind's Eye website at:

www.mindseyedescription.co.uk

278 Season's greetings from Hereford

The magic of theatre is brilliantly captured in this photo sent by the Courtyard Audio Description Association, whose volunteer team describe mainly at the Courtyard Centre for the Arts in Hereford. The fairy lights strung round the Christmas tree in the theatre foyer create a shimmering golden haze, reflected in the glass above the display panels nearby where golden letters spelling PETER PAN gleam enticingly.



The photo comes with CADA's good wishes for Christmas and the New Year to everyone involved in audio description in the UK and beyond.

www.courtyard.co.uk

279 ... and from Sightlines



Last year a robin on Sightlines' Christmas card, this year a fieldfare (or snow bird in the North of England), shown hunched on the snowy ground with its speckled brown and white breast feathers puffed out against the cold, and a beady eye on the camera. A couple of sprigs of purple heather poke through the surrounding snow.

Jonathan Nash and Julia Grundy join photographer Margaret Spittles in sending season's greetings from the Sightlines team.

www.sightlines-audio-description.com

280 ... and from Note Pad

For Christmas 2018, *Note Pad* has again borrowed one of RSC describer Ellie Packer's hand-drawn-and-coloured original designs (thank you, Ellie!) This year's bold design is a side view of a black and white puffin, seen in outline on a plain white background. The bird has evidently just landed – one orange webbed foot is planted firmly on the ground, but instead of the usual sand eels its brightly-coloured beak is full of Christmas holly.



A very happy Christmas to all our readers, and a trouble-free year ahead!

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www.audiodescription.co.uk