

Audio Description Association



note pad

Items 157 - 161

December 2015

157 Growing Audiences for Audio Description

National Conference, Birmingham Hippodrome, 14 March 2016



Tempting the reluctant – and winning back the disaffected is the strapline for ADA's conference on audience development to be held in partnership with RNIB at Birmingham Hippodrome next March. With input from regular users, lapsed users and non-users of audio description, the conference will investigate why people with sight loss choose to visit theatres, museums and galleries (or not), and what venues can do to encourage attendance at audio described events. Workshops will focus on the role of new technologies, marketing techniques and the visitor experience.

The booking form giving details of cost and payment options is separately attached. (ADA MEMBERS: please note your Early Bird discount offer ends on 10 December!) All enquiries to: office@audiodescription.co.uk

158 German-speaking audio describer/script writer wanted

Cardiff TV Sound Studios (one of ADA's corporate members) is looking for an audio describer/script writer fluent in German, for a potential future job on a feature film. If you can help, please contact:

✉ ctvsoundstudios@gmail.com (Rhys Jones and Meurig Hailstone)

☎ 02920 450950 (Rhys Jones and Meurig Hailstone) or 07940 10024 (Rhys Jones)

CTV Sound Studios' range of services currently includes audio description for the Welsh language television broadcaster S4C (Sianel Pedwar Cymru = Channel Four Wales).

www.ctvsoundstudios.co.uk

159 Experimenting with integrated audio description

Last October *Disability Arts Online* published an interview with Chloe Phillips, one of its visually impaired contributors, focusing on her planned research into integrated audio description. This is a shortened version of Colin Hambrook's interview:

“Chloe Phillips is an Associate Artist with Taking Flight Theatre, based in Cardiff. Earlier this year she received an Unlimited R&D award to work with the company to produce *The Importance of Being Described...Earnestly?* - a pilot for a production experimenting with new ideas about audio description.

Phillips's passion is to raise awareness of audio description and to get theatre companies to consider it as a creative tool. Access for visually impaired people to theatre performance is overlooked generally, aside from a few notable companies like Extant, Graeae, Birds of Paradise and Fittings, who have pioneered creative ways of using audio description – embedding it into the process of devising theatre at its inception. Phillips recalls:

For years I opted out of using audio description. I would rather sit there with a friend whispering essential bits of information that I needed describing to understand the performance. What I hate most is that with a headset I feel segregated and isolated from the rest of the audience.

I feel strongly that for a theatre piece to give a visually impaired person equal access it's important that all the performers are aware of the AD - and for that to happen it needs to be integrated from the start. There is almost no point in producing AD over the top of a predesigned show. For me at least, it just doesn't work.

Phillips is going on a journey, researching visually impaired people's responses to theatre. She wants to find out what is preventing VI audiences from coming to the theatre. Is it because people don't know about AD? Or is it that they feel the type of AD that's being offered doesn't cater for their needs?

To aid the research Phillips plans to start a blog about the process and put it out through different outlets. She hopes to reach a range of VIPs to find out their views on theatre and AD and to build a case for the style of presentation that *The Importance of Being Described... Earnestly?* will be experimenting with. The plan is that two development weeks will take place at a venue in Cardiff at the beginning of March 2016. A showing of a few select scenes for an invited audience will happen on Friday 18th March 2016.”

Read the full interview, with Chloe Phillips’ email address and invitation to contact her to share experiences of audio description, at:

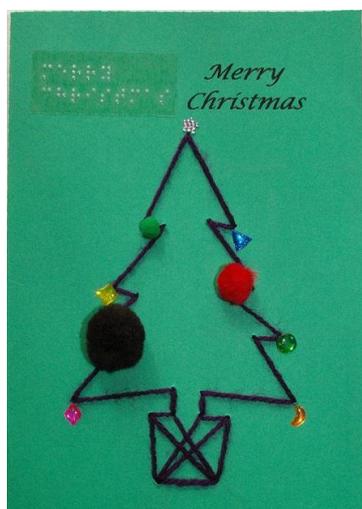
www.disabilityartsonline.org.uk/unlimited-chloe-phillips-the-importance-of-being-described-earnestly

DAO also published Chloe’s account of her visit to Unlimited’s showcase of visual arts during this year’s Edinburgh Fringe, at:

www.disabilityartsonline.org.uk/edinburgh-festival-unlimited-exhibition-audio-description

She ends with her vision of integrated audio description, not simply as an escape from the limitations of conventional audio description and its equipment, but as a means of “changing what has traditionally been thought of as purely an access tool into something more immersive, inclusive and much more interesting”.

160 Multisensory Christmas cards



Note Pad’s early Christmas card from Sightlines reproduced in our last issue is joined by this handcrafted card featuring a decorated Christmas tree. It is one of a range of tactile and scented greetings cards designed and sold by visually impaired artist Lynn Cox.

Lynn’s other three Christmas designs are Snowflake, Stocking, and Presents, all of which carry a seasonal greeting in both Braille and print. Please contact Lynn (email address below) for full descriptions and images.

The cards are £6.00 (\$9.50) each if bought from Lynn direct, or £20.00 (\$32.00) for a set of four (one of each design). Postage is free worldwide. To order, phone Lynn Cox on +44(0)208 544 9681 or email her at: artscoachingtraining@gmail.com

161 “Two London firsts” for VocalEyes

VocalEyes (another of ADA’s corporate members) reports two London firsts in its programme of events for December and January: *A day of accessible theatre* at Hackney’s Arcola Theatre on Saturday 12 December 2015, when a free workshop exploring access for blind and partially sighted audiences will be followed by an audio described double bill of plays by Howard Barker; and *Around the World in 80 Days* at St James Theatre on Thursday 7 January 2016, which will be the venue’s first audio described performance since it opened on the site of the demolished Westminster Theatre three years ago. Scroll down for more about the London firsts and visit VocalEyes’ website for the other dates on its calendar:

www.vocaleyeyes.co.uk

● A day of accessible theatre, Arcola Theatre, 12 December 2015, 12.00-5.50pm

First seen in Dublin in 2001, with the author directing, *The Twelfth Battle of Isonzo* now premieres in London. The title is a World War One reference, and Howard Barker’s dark comedy is a war of words between Isonzo (“blind, witty and 100 years old”) and Tenna (“blind, beautiful and just 17”) on their wedding night. It is not only the comedy that is dark in this production. Director Robyn Winford-Smith plunges the studio theatre into darkness for most of the hour-long play, with the audience wearing headphones for a 3D audio experience of the action. “Sound logic”, Howard Loxton calls this decision in his review for *British Theatre Guide*. “Denying spectators vision both puts them in the place of the characters and avoids any presentational difficulties in showing nudity and performing a sexual encounter that is very explicit”.

War itself is the theme of the second play, Barker’s better-known *Judith: the Parting of the Body* (1992), in which he reimagines the biblical story of Judith, the Israelite widow who seduced and beheaded the Assyrian general, Holofernes. The audio description for both plays is written and delivered by Tony McBride with editorial support from Pauline Brandt and Clare Le May.

Tony McBride also leads the opening workshop on access to theatre for people with sight loss. It begins at 12.00 noon, followed by a touch tour at 2.00pm, and the Howard Barker double bill at 3.30pm. Full details are available on the Arcola's website at:

www.arcolatheatre.com

● **First audio described performance, St James Theatre, 7 January 2016, 7.30pm**

Around the World in 80 Days, adapted by Laura Eason from the novel by Jules Verne and directed by Lucy Bailey, is this year's Christmas show at St James Theatre. A cast of eight play over fifty characters during Phineas Fogg's famous journey, which in this production involves six trains, five boats, four fights, three dances, two circus acts and an elephant. No challenges for the describer there, then!

The audio description for this historic performance is written and delivered by Roz Chalmers, with editorial support from Louise Fryer and Clare Le May. For further information, check the venue's website at:

www.stjamestheatre.co.uk



*Owned and operated by Entertainment & Media Group,
St James Theatre was hailed as "the first newly built theatre complex in central London for 30 years"
when it opened in September 2012*

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