

## BIOGRAPHIES & ABSTRACTS

**Raymond Walker's** interest in stage lighting began in his teens with involvement in amateur dramatic and operatic productions in Manchester. In 2006, he founded Victorian Opera Northwest to make recordings of forgotten British composers. Research into early British staging with the V&A and British Library archives led to the publication of "Backdrop to a Legend" in 2018. Lasting links with Australian theatre designers who contributed to his research were made at the time. Raymond has given lectures of stage scenery for the Victoria & Albert Museum, Buxton and Harrogate Festivals.

### Abstract

Painting stage scenery in the 19th Century was a busy and lucrative profession. Attractive and realistic sets were sought after and the Victorian painters gave of their best. The D'Oyly Carte Opera Company recorded many aspects of their productions in well-preserved archives. We take a journey through the lives and skills of these painters, their knowledge, and changes in fashion they had to accept in staging and lighting. Their well-kept secrets have now come to light. They joined London clubs, had servants and were able retire comfortably.

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**Dr David Wilmore** was educated at Newcastle University where he became involved with the restoration of the Tyne Theatre & Opera House. On Christmas Day 1985 the stage house was gutted by fire and he spent the next two years restoring the theatre a second time. He formed theatresearch in 1986 and has been involved in many theatre restoration projects including the Georgian Theatre Royal, Richmond [1788], Matcham's Theatre Royal Newcastle upon Tyne [1901], Theatre Royal, Bristol [1766] and Matcham's Gaiety Theatre & Opera House, Isle of Man [1900]. He directed the opera Ages Ago for the National Gilbert and Sullivan Company and has also been known to perform his one man show Matcham's Lost Empires! Current projects include the restoration of the Tyne Theatre & Opera House, Buxton Opera House and the Grand Theatre Blackpool (all of which engaged the hand of Frank Matcham).

### Abstract

During the 1980s David worked on the early conservation of the Normansfield Amusement Hall in London. It was at that time, working with his great friend Terence Rees that they stumbled upon the original painted scenery portraits from Gilbert and Sullivan's opera "Ruddygore". This paper tells the story of the research journey and the extra-ordinary sequence of events that led to the scenery finding a home in this small private theatre in Hampton Wick.

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**Karen Thompson**, ACR, FIIC, FHEA, SF-RET, is a senior lecturer and co-convenor for the MPhil Textile Conservation programme, Kelvin Centre for Conservation and Cultural Heritage Research, University of Glasgow. Karen was project manager for the conservation of the Normansfield Theatre Scenery.

### **The Normansfield scenery collection and its conservation**

The talk will provide an overview of the Normansfield Theatre painted scenery collection and its conservation. This Victorian theatre was part of the Normansfield Hospital in Teddington, London, which houses over 100 pieces of painted scenery. Through the process of documentation and conservation much was learnt about the scenery materials and making. This will be presented alongside providing insight into the conservation decision making and treatments carried out.

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**Dr Wendy Waszut-Barrett** is a scenic artist and theatre historian. She is the founder of Historic Stage Services, LLC, a firm specializing in painted illusion for the stage. For over thirty years her passion has remained the preservation and replication of scenic art for historic venues. Dr. Waszut-Barrett's current research and projects are posted to her website [www.drypigment.net](http://www.drypigment.net).

### **Scenic Art: Past and Present**

"Preserving the Past" goes beyond the actual care of theatre artifacts; it also applies to the theatrical trades. Although many nineteenth-century scene art techniques were well-documented in theatrical manuals, most have been lost from institutional memory. This paper will examine distemper painting for the theatre, both past and present.

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**Grit Eckert** was born and brought up in the North of Germany and from a young age enjoyed painting and making things, getting involved in theatre work at the age of sixteen. Due to a lack of training opportunities within scene painting she came to London and gained a BA in Scenic Art and a MA in Theatre Practices at the Rose Bruford College. Over the years she has worked across the full discipline of scene painting including teaching and historical research as well as a bit of positive activism in raising awareness of workspaces. She currently works as a freelance scenic artist.

### **We are still here !!!! Scene Painting - a Historical Study and still a Theatrical Trade.**

This paper explores the enduring practice of scene painting, linking the Victorian and Edwardian period, and its ongoing relevance in contemporary theatre practice.

Anecdotes from my career as a scene painter and educator illustrates the persistence and vitality of this art form. These stories not only connect us to historical practices but also demonstrate ongoing shifts and continuities within the trade. The paper underscores the significance of scene painting as both a historical study and vibrant, dynamic practice that continues to shape theatrical productions today.

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**Professor Christina Young** is Director of The Kelvin Centre for Conservation and Cultural Heritage Research at the University of Glasgow. She has been conducting research for over ten years on the history of scenic art and artists in Great Britain: *The Power To Transform*. Her other research interests include the conservation of modern and contemporary art and painted cloth.

### **C19th Century Scottish Scenic Painters: Paint Frame to Picture Frame**

The foundations and high point in popular culture in the early nineteenth century of visual depictions of the Scottish landscape and culture within the public domain was born out of the burgeoning theatres and academies of Edinburgh and Glasgow, and through the Norie brothers who were instrumental in developing a homegrown dynasty of decorative, landscape and theatrical scene painters. This paper traces their legacy which now can only be imagined through the watercolours, lithographs and oil paintings that brought the Scottish landscape and culture into the galleries and drawing rooms of Britain.