

London's Arcola Theatre moves towards a greener future with hydrogen fuel cell installation

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A leading independent venue in London, the Arcola Theatre, has been fitted with a 5kW hydrogen fuel cell to power its café/bar and selected main house shows. According to the theatre operators, the first production to be powered by the cell - Simple8's *The Living Unknown Soldier* (pictured) - "may well be London's premier ecologically sustainable show", writes David Davies.

Set construction, marketing, company travel and show lighting have all been minimised in an effort to reduce the environmental impact of the production. The show's environmental footprint will be evaluated by leading sustainability advice outfit Global Action Plan, with the lessons learned to be published for the benefit of other operators.

Utilisation of LED lighting (provided by White Light) and high efficiency tungsten lamps (from ETC) reportedly enable the show to keep to a peak power consumption of 4.5kW, up to 60% less than comparable lighting installations.

In addition, Arcola's bar/café has been upgraded to become an eco-bar serving organic and fair-trade refreshments, illuminated by a low-energy LED lighting system supplied by PixelRange. The lighting for this area is now said to consume under 500W - a saving of 60%.

"The fuel cell installation is part of a wider project to try and make the Arcola fully carbon neutral, which we hope will happen by 2012," Dr Ben Todd, the theatre's executive director and a consultant in the fuel cell industry, told II. "Future projects are likely to include some kind of bio boiler and solar fuel cell as we continue to demonstrate new technologies and implement some existing market-level technologies."

The IdaTech ElectraGen fuel cell system was supplied by London Hydrogen Partnership, with additional funding from the UK Department for Culture, Media & Sport, Arts Council England, the London Borough of Hackney and the Mayor of London's Greening London Theatre Initiative. Hydrogen for the fuel cell was supplied by BOC.

PICTURE: Robin Hayward

For more information:

www.arcolaenergy.com

