

Low Energy Naturalistic Lighting – The Critic’s Choice



The Arcola Theatre demonstrates that there is no artistic compromise required to deliver low energy naturalistic lighting for classic works. Mehmet Ergen’s critically acclaimed production of Ibsen’s *An Enemy of the People* is lit on under 5kW.

The challenge was to light a naturalistic piece of theatre, Ibsen’s *An Enemy of the People*, with a peak lighting load of just 5kW. For a previous show at Arcola Theatre *The Living Unknown Soldier*, LED and fluorescent sources were used to cut power consumption to this level, however the colours, dimming profiles, and quality of light given from the current generation of LEDs and fluorescents makes it difficult to use them in naturalistic pieces where the lighting should go unnoticed.

Lighting designer Michael Nabarro* instead used a combination of lower-wattage and lower-voltage tungsten sources including Selecon luminaires supplied by White Light. Thus the overall power draw was trimmed, without artistic compromise, because:

- While in theory lower-power sources should give commensurately less lighting effect, in practice this is not the case: in one instance, using 300W vs. 650W lamps in [Selecon Acclaim luminaires](#) yielded the lighting effect required with nearly 35% energy savings.
- Selecon’s [1200W 80V Pacific luminaires](#) provide the equivalent light output of a 2500W source and with a 90 degree lens can provide extensive stage coverage from a single unit.

- Selecon's [50W 12V Aureol luminaires](#), which are essentially high quality 'birdies' with lens tubes and light-shaping fittings, give a surprisingly large light output and thus just a small number of them can replace a much larger lamp.

Lighting designer Michael Nabarro: ***"This show has been lit on significantly less power than it might otherwise have been using traditional equipment. The quality of the finished product has not suffered and the show is in no way "under lit", proof that it is possible to provide effective theatre lighting with a low energy budget."***

Director Mehmet Ergen: ***"The environmental impact of all theatre productions can be reduced without artistic compromise through careful choices and creativity. I urge all directors to demand not more light and bigger set budgets but the right light and the right set"***.

The focus on sustainability for this production is part of Arcola Theatre's ongoing work to address the causes of climate change and environmental degradation through Arcola Energy, a multi-disciplinary project which engages the creativity of the arts and sciences to find new and exciting solutions to environmental issues. Arcola Theatre's work feeds in to the Mayor of London's ground breaking Climate Change Action Plan for Theatres.

Notes:

Press release supplied by Dr Ben Todd, Executive Director at Arcola Theatre. The Theatre was founded in 2000 by Artistic Director Mehmet Ergen and Executive Producer Leyla Nazli, when they converted a textile factory on the borders of Stoke Newington/Dalston into one of London's largest and most adaptable venues. Arcola Theatre has won a numerous awards, including Time Out Live Awards in 2003 and 2006. It has gained a reputation for staging innovative work by renowned actors, writers and directors, as well as maintaining a strong commitment to involving the local community. Arcola Theatre is regularly funded by Arts Council England. <http://www.arcolatheatre.com/>

Arcola Energy, launched in July 2007 aims to harness the creativity of arts, sciences and engineering to tackle climate change and encourage environmental sustainability. <http://www.arcolaenergy.com/>

Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People*, a new version by Rebecca Lenkiewicz and directed by Mehmet Ergen, was part of the 2008 Ibsen Season at Arcola Theatre.

*Michael Nabarro is a graduate of the RADA Lighting Design course. Lighting designs include *An Enemy of the People* and *The Blind* (Arcola Theatre); *Limbo & 1984* (York Theatre Royal) and *Rivers Run Deep & Fight Fight Fight!* (Hampstead Theatre Studio). Between 2003 and 2006 he was manager of the ADC Theatre in Cambridge. <http://www.michaelnabarro.com/>

The Mayor of London's Climate Change Action Plan for Theatre initiative is part of the Climate Change Action Plan for London, one of the most comprehensive and ambitious in the world, which aims to deliver a 60% reduction in London's CO2 emissions (relative to 1990 levels) by 2025. www.london.gov.uk/mayor/environment/climate-change/ccap/

http://www.seleconlight.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=515&Itemid=193