



## Technical savvy at Wits

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The Wits Theatre's *Moving Light Workshop* held on the 2nd October was met with interest from students ranging from those studying architecture to fine arts and even a fine photography student curious to know how to photograph haze.

The all girls "Wits Theatre Honor Crew", however, were the stars. Their training started on the day prior to the event as they enthusiastically helped unload flightcases and assisted with set up – a new game for them.



DWR

Distribution were asked to supply lighting and basic training for the event put together by Heidi Hoffer. This delightful scenographer, a professor at the Oklahoma State University Theatre Department, arrived in South Africa in July this year as a Fulbright Award Scholar. She will stay at Wits until December and will then relocate to the University of Pretoria for a further six months before returning to the United States. "I do scenery lighting and costumes when I get hired, primarily for theatre, musicals and dramas," commented Heidi. But her real zeal has been teaching students across the globe all she possibly can about theatre. Not only about lighting design, backdrop sceneries and costumes, but emphasizing the technical with practical know how. This becomes vital as students find themselves in venues where gear can range from thirty year old hardworking Majors (as she has in her university back home) to cutting edge technology such as moving lights and consoles.



For the *Moving Light Workshop*, DWR Distribution provided a Digi Spot run from a Tiger Touch console, Robe fixtures, Selecons, a complete line of Vari\*Lites, Lumen Radio wireless DMX, a Le Maitre hazer, and Anolis architectural LED instruments all run on a grandMA2. The Wits Theatre has Martin units which were also implemented in the rig. DWR's Nick Britz presented training on the grandMA2 and gave the students opportunity to physically program their own show.



“Saturday was the big lecture-demonstration, the professional lighting designer round table, and the final ‘Rock and Roll’ moving light sensory experience,” said Heidi. Students from a high school, architecture, fine arts, photography, film, and Wits staff, a professional interior designer and several professional lighting designers and a professional theatre company manager attended. Most spoke their thoughts about the lighting design field: encouraging and admonishing the students to study everything, have the right attitude, love what you do, and above all be kind. After all, truly successful lighting people take DWR’s motto to heart: *It’s all about the PEOPLE.*





“There has to be a reason why we’re in this industry,” said Heidi. “It doesn’t make money but it does provide passion.”

In closure Heidi extended her thanks to the individuals who played a role in the success of the day. Thank you Julian August, Carry Preston, Cathy Pisante, Ashraf Johaardien, Lerato Sekele, Philip Kruger, Paul Pamboukian, Carl Johnson, Gerda Kruger, Oliver Hauser, Jenni-Lee Crewe, Warren Nebe, Maria Marques Fiandeiro, Dan Riley, Duncan Riley, Simon Ndlovu, Nick Britz, Bruce Riley, Sherryn Riley and Robert Izzett. “The Wits Honors Crew is proud to have worked with you all,” she ended.

