

UJ students go backstage



The team at the University of Johannesburg Arts Centre and DWR Distribution invited students to explore the world of a backstage technician with a Lighting Design Workshop two-day class hosted earlier this year. It was aimed at UJ students who follow subjects other than theatre, with the hope that they would develop a love for the arts and possibly sign up as crew for the many festivals and productions the theatre is involved with.



"The first evening was testing the boundaries of their awareness of the industry," said Michael Broderick from DWR who presented the course. "I think the students were a bit overwhelmed by the theory and expected to be playing with lights from the outset. To be honest, without the background and without the theory you can't actually do anything."



"On the second night, they were a lot more prepared and their minds were tuned to listening so we were able to explore some of the practical aspects of lighting. At the close of the second evening, the students were far more engaged and it was extremely rewarding to have been able to stimulate some curious minds, the question and answer session was clear proof of this. Overall, it was a good experience for me and I like to think the students would agree it was the same for them."



Michael Broderick and Jannie de Jager – DWR

The group consisted of a variety of students studying for B-Comm, law and even Civil Engineering. "I was curious as to why they were there to start with, but their interest was explained as it became clearer how their curiosity and exposure to lighting had come about. With some of them it started with helping out at their local church while others were regularly involved in community groups," said Broderick.



What the students had to say:

"Because I am part of a church community, I knew the basics about lighting but never the details."

During our programme with Mike Broderick, I loved it. I learnt so much. I learnt that there are different kinds of lighting, I learnt about temperatures and movement. I know going back to church, if one were to say, what are those lights, I'd say 'That's a Profile!'

"I am a performer. For me, when you are on stage, there are different lights and now I have an opinion on what they are and do."



"I study film and television, but because I'm also a performer, an actor, the course has helped me understand that there is a vast difference between tv and theatre lighting, even though there are many similarities."