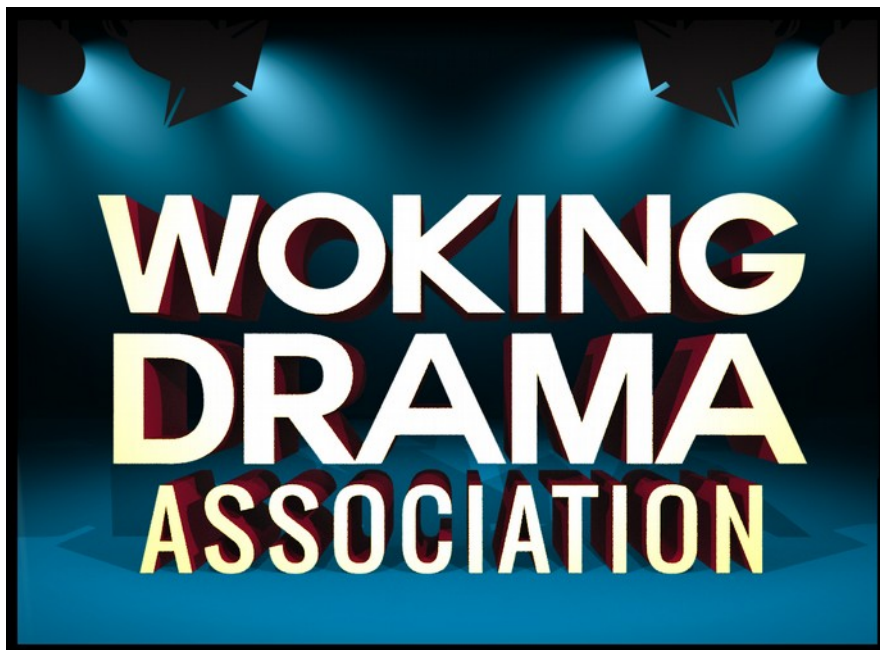


# The Woking Drama Festival Lighting Guide



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## 1 Introduction

This guide is divided into two sections. The first is aimed at groups who are familiar with theatre lighting, whilst the second is aimed at less experienced groups. Both sections give details of what the festival team need to know in order to help light your show. They describe how to prepare and what to expect at the various stages of the process. No matter how experienced you are – please do read this, as different festivals have different rules.

## 2 The WDF lighting guide for experienced groups

Unlike the sound desk, the lighting desk is operated by the WDF lighting crew. We will endeavour to rig and patch (but not focus) any special lighting you may need before your technical time. Therefore, there are things we need to know to be prepared for your show and the following sections outline what information we will need at each stage and what you can expect.

### 2.1 The standard rig

The festival uses a 'standard rig' of general purpose lighting which all the groups share (included at the end of this guide). This means we cannot refocus any of the lanterns you see in this plan. The stage is divided up into a number of areas, outlined in green in the diagrams and labelled 'A' through to 'P'. Each of these areas has both a warm wash (Lee 176) and a cold wash (Lee 174). Note that the areas have a spill to ensure an even coverage between them. Therefore the areas are not sharply focussed and light bleeds into adjacent areas. Each area is lit to ensure cover for an average height person at each corner.

In addition to the general wash, there are two banks of LED PARs (RGBAW) for back lighting over the stage. These can be used to produce a good range of colours. Note they are not aligned to the grid areas. In addition, the cyc (behind the No. 3 tabs) has LED battens (RGBW) at the top, again giving a good range of colours.

The theatre also has 2 follow-spots but you will have to provide an operator! These cannot be controlled from the lighting desk.

There is a diagram at the end of this manual showing the theatres' plug bays. The independent sockets are operated with standard switches in the lighting control room and may have multiple socket types as shown in the diagram. DMX sockets are also shown.. Do however discuss with us at your producer's meeting if you plan to bring or use anything requiring DMX input.

### 2.2 Producers meetings

At the producers meeting we will want to know roughly how many cues your show will have. This is so that we can reserve sufficient space in the overall festival cue list. We also need to know how many specials you need – up to a maximum of 4. A 'special' is defined as anything you need to run that is not part of the standard festival rig and which needs power. This can be anything from a spotlight in the rig or a birdie sat on the stage, to an extension for a practical such as a street-lamp etc. For standard lanterns such as profiles or fresnels, we can provide these. In the case of spotlights

we mostly use Source 4 25/50s. We have size B gobo holders and irises available. If you wish to use anything 'exotic' then you may have to provide that yourself (especially any actual gobos). Clearly, the more you tell us at the producer's meeting, the better prepared we can all be for your technical time.

### **2.3 Your technical time at the theatre**

During your technical time we will first need to focus any 'specials' you may have. Once that is done, you talk the WDF crew through programming your lighting plot into the lighting desk. Therefore, during your performance it is only necessary to call the cues to our operator. If you have experience of using the lighting desk and have a very complicated/repetitive piece then it is possible to program states onto the sub-masters and run the show yourselves in using these. However, we avoid this unless absolutely necessary and it is very important that you tell us during the producer's meeting that this is what you need to do.

The lighting desk we use is an ETC ION with a single fader wing extension. However, although this is a fairly sophisticated desk, the duration of your technical time severely limits what you can achieve.

It is usual to set/focus all specials at the start of your technical time in the theatre before we begin plotting. If you have requested specials in the main lighting rig then we should have these rigged before you arrive, but they will still need to be focused during your technical time. If you are bringing your own lanterns/effects, we will therefore need these before your technical time – ideally the Saturday of our get-in at the theatre. We can fit gobos during your technical time so we don't need these in advance.

Note that there are no curtain calls in festival performances.

### **2.4 The performance**

We will set any on-stage lanterns during your set-up time and strike them for you after your show. You are responsible for any practicals which are part of your set but we will ensure the cables are provided as per your technical time.

The house lights are on a separate control and the main tabs can be operated from the lighting box or from the stage by your SM. Once we have clearance from our front-of-house we will expect you to then take over calling the show. Once you have the go-ahead from your SM we will fade the house lights and are happy to operate the tabs on your instruction too if you wish.

Ideally we need you to provide 'LX stand-by' shortly before each cue and a clear 'LX Go' at the appropriate point (together with the cue number). You can cue us from the lighting box, from the sound desk or from the SM desk on-stage (we normally ask you to decide this during your technical time). After your final black-out, we will take over and your job is complete!

### **2.5 Some advice!**

You will appreciate that your technical time is not very long! Your director will be pulled in all

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directions during this time - by your SM, the cast and possibly by your sound engineer for volume levels etc. Therefore, to make the most of this time it helps if your lighting designer knows the show well enough to make all the judgement calls themselves during the plotting. You can always run through the plot at the end with the director for approval! Sometimes you'll want to rehearse critical parts with the sound and/or cast – the beginning and end is usual. So do allow yourself time for all of this. It is better to have a simple, good looking and well-rehearsed lighting plot than something complex which may be under-tested/rehearsed on the night.

### 3 The WDF lighting guide for beginners

This section is suitable for groups who have little or no knowledge of lighting. The good news is that although the Rhoda McGaw theatre has a sophisticated lighting desk, you won't have to program it – we'll do all of that for you! However, we do expect you to know what your show needs to look like under the lights, but we will help you to achieve that. In order to do this though, there is some essential information we will need from you. The rest of this guide will explain how to light your show, what information we will need from you and when we will need it.

#### 3.1 The steps involved

The first real step is when you come to your producer's meeting. You should have thought about your lighting and what you want to do. We will need to know if you need any special equipment (extra lights, leads for on-set lamps or other electrical equipment etc). We will also expect you to know roughly how many lighting changes ('cues') you will need – but that number doesn't have to be exact. At the meeting we will discuss your lighting and answer any questions that you may have.

The most important time of all is your technical time at the theatre. In this short space of time we will need to adjust any special lights that you have requested and then program all of your lighting into the lighting desk. It is important that by now your lighting designer knows exactly what they want. The director will be trying to organise many different things in this technical time, so the less they are needed for lighting, the quicker the process will be.

Finally, on the night of your performance, your show will have been programmed into the lighting desk and all you need is someone that can tell our operator when each lighting change is needed. This can be the lighting designer, the sound operator, your stage manager – anyone who can be in a suitable place to use the theatre headsets which allow the crew to communicate.

#### 3.2 How to design your lighting

At the end of this guide is a diagram showing the 'Standard Rig'. This shows a plan of the stage overlaid with a grid of areas in green and labelled 'A' through to 'P'. Each one of these areas can be lit separately using the standard lighting that all of the shows share. Each individual area has lights to make it look 'warm' (orange/yellow), or 'cold' (blue). These two colours can be mixed in any combination in any area and can cover ('wash') the whole stage if desired. Note that these areas overlap and are not tightly focused to the green grid lines. Instead they blend into each other to form an even 'wash' when adjacent areas are lit.

In addition, if the No. 3 black tabs (curtains) are left open then a white ('cyc') cloth is exposed that covers the entire back wall. There are lights at the top of this that can cover it in any colour you choose. Note that the colour is strongest at the top and if you are using the normal wash lights in areas L to P then they will naturally also shine onto the lower part of the cyc cloth.

Lastly, directly over the stage are another set of general lights that can wash the stage itself in almost any colour. They form a very general wash which doesn't align with the grid and they shine from the back, forward onto the stage, so they will not shine on an actor's face etc.

If you need anything else (e.g. a profile spot in an exact place on the stage), then we will probably need to organise some dedicated lighting for your show. We will also need to know if you require power for any 'practicals' on stage – i.e. anything that needs power, from a bedside lamp, to a lamp-post or a kettle etc. We can also arrange for additional lamps you might need on stage, for instance a small lamp shining up on faces can make a very convincing TV! However, you are allowed at most 4 'specials' for your show, and you must tell us about these in advance at the producer's meeting. If you do need lights that need to be set ('focused'), then this must all be done in your technical time so do factor that in. Note however, that we will have rigged any specials that hang off the theatre overhead bars before your technical time.

### 3.3 Cues

Now that you know what lighting is available, you need to know how to use it to light your show. For the purposes of lighting, a show is made up of a series of 'cues'. A cue is simply a change to the lighting of some kind. For instance, after the auditorium lights have gone down, your first 'cue' is probably the theatre lights coming up for your first scene. Every time the lights change - that is another cue, and these are numbered from 1 until the very last cue (lights out!). It is important to note that a blackout is also counted as a cue. So if you change from one scene to another with a black-out for a scene change, that counts as 2 cues (lights down for the scene change and then another cue for lights up for the next scene). However, if you want a seamless change with the lights going down in one area and simultaneously coming up on another, that is only counted as a single cue since everything happens at once.

### 3.4 Your technical time at the theatre

If you have any 'specials' to set, then that is usually the first thing that we will do during your technical time. Be aware you may have to wait until your set is erected if that is crucial to your lighting – so allow extra time for that. Next, your lighting designer will need to talk the WDF lighting crew through each 'cue' to set the lighting as you want it. Each cue will be programmed into the lighting desk. As well as the lighting colours and levels (brightness), the timing for each transition is also set. Each cue can be instantaneous through to taking several seconds or minutes to complete. Remember - during your performance no cue will start until you tell us to start it. However, once started, the duration of the individual change is whatever we have set during your technical time.

If you have no special lanterns to adjust, then you can probably comfortably plot 20 cues during your technical time. You may be able to squeeze in more if the same lighting states are repeated.

Depending on how many cues you have, you may have time to go back and adjust cues and timings in order to get it 'just right'. Don't forget though that you may want to leave yourself time to review all of the lighting cues with your director, or even rehearse them with sound/action etc. In order to fit all of this in, make sure you don't get too ambitious with your lighting and keep an eye on the clock!

### 3.5 The performance

During your show, you will have to tell our operator every time you need the next lighting cue to start. This is because it might depend on a line, an action, a sound effect etc, so we always take our cues from you! However, anyone on the theatre headsets can cue our operator so they can sit in the lighting control room itself, or else cue from the sound box or the stage manager's desk which is in the wings, stage right.

For each cue, if there is sufficient time you should call a 'LX stand-by' a short while before, followed by an 'LX Go' at the moment you want the cue to start. It is important that you state the cue number so we can be sure the correct cue is ready. For instance 'LX 4 Stand-by', followed by 'LX 4 Go'. Saying 'LX' ensures we know your stage manager is talking to us and not your sound engineer!

As well as the main lighting you will also need to tell us when to take down the main house-lights before your play begins. We can help to run this for you (as well as operating the main curtains if you're using them). However, it's important you know the sequence for the opening of your play – especially if you have opening music etc. Your stage manager should ensure that everyone (including the cast) is ready before we start to dim the house-lights.

We will take care of all of the lighting before and after your show. We will also help you set and strike any on-stage specials you may have for your show during the intervals.

### 3.6 And finally ...

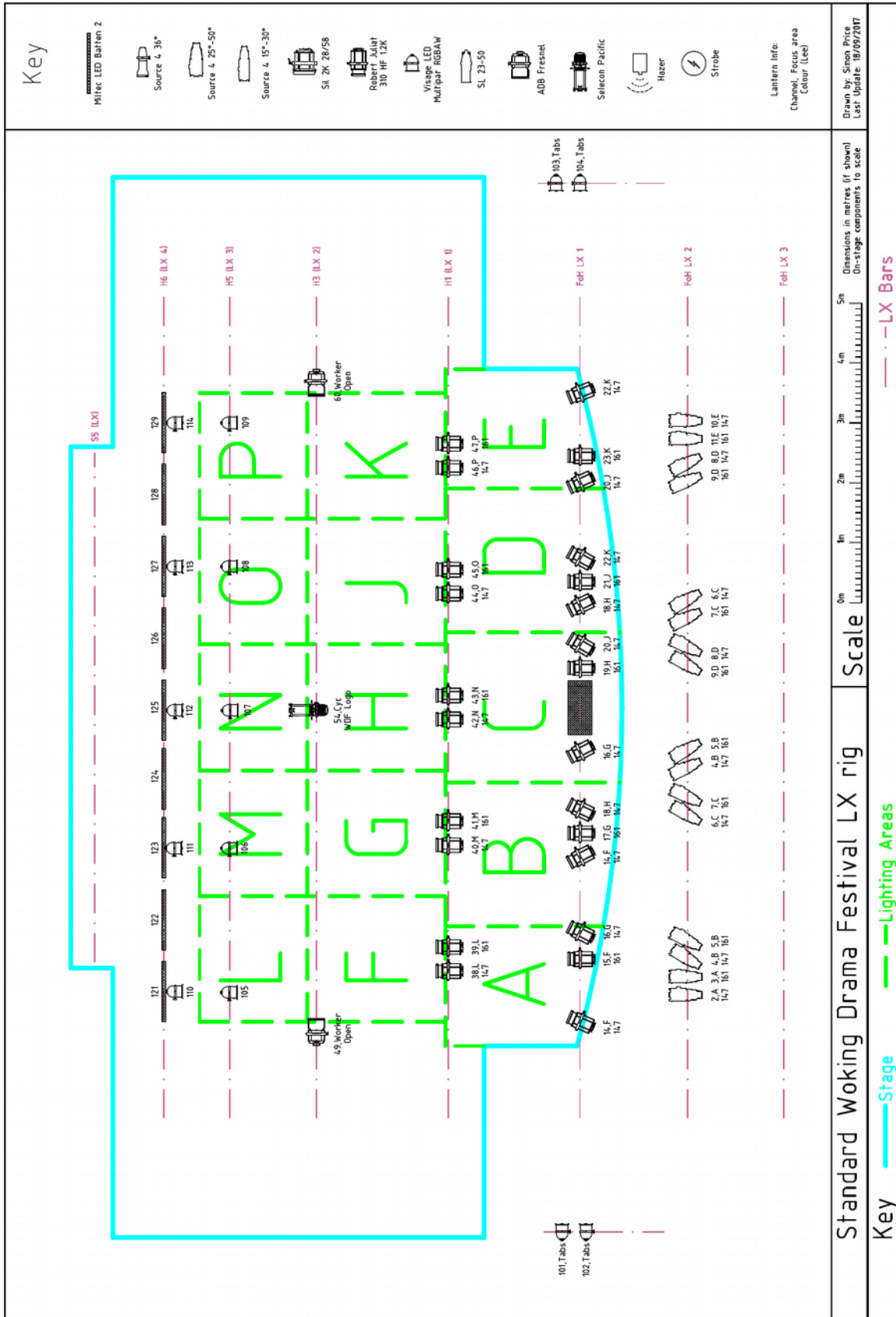
We will do our best to help you realise the lighting you want for your show. Clearly though, because there is a competitive element to the festival we cannot design your lighting for you! However, if you know *what* you want to achieve but are unsure *how* to do it, then please talk to us at your producer's meeting and we may be able to discuss the ways you might best achieve it. We will be happy to try to answer any questions you have via email or calls before the producers meetings, but please bear in mind there are many groups in the festival and we all have day-jobs!



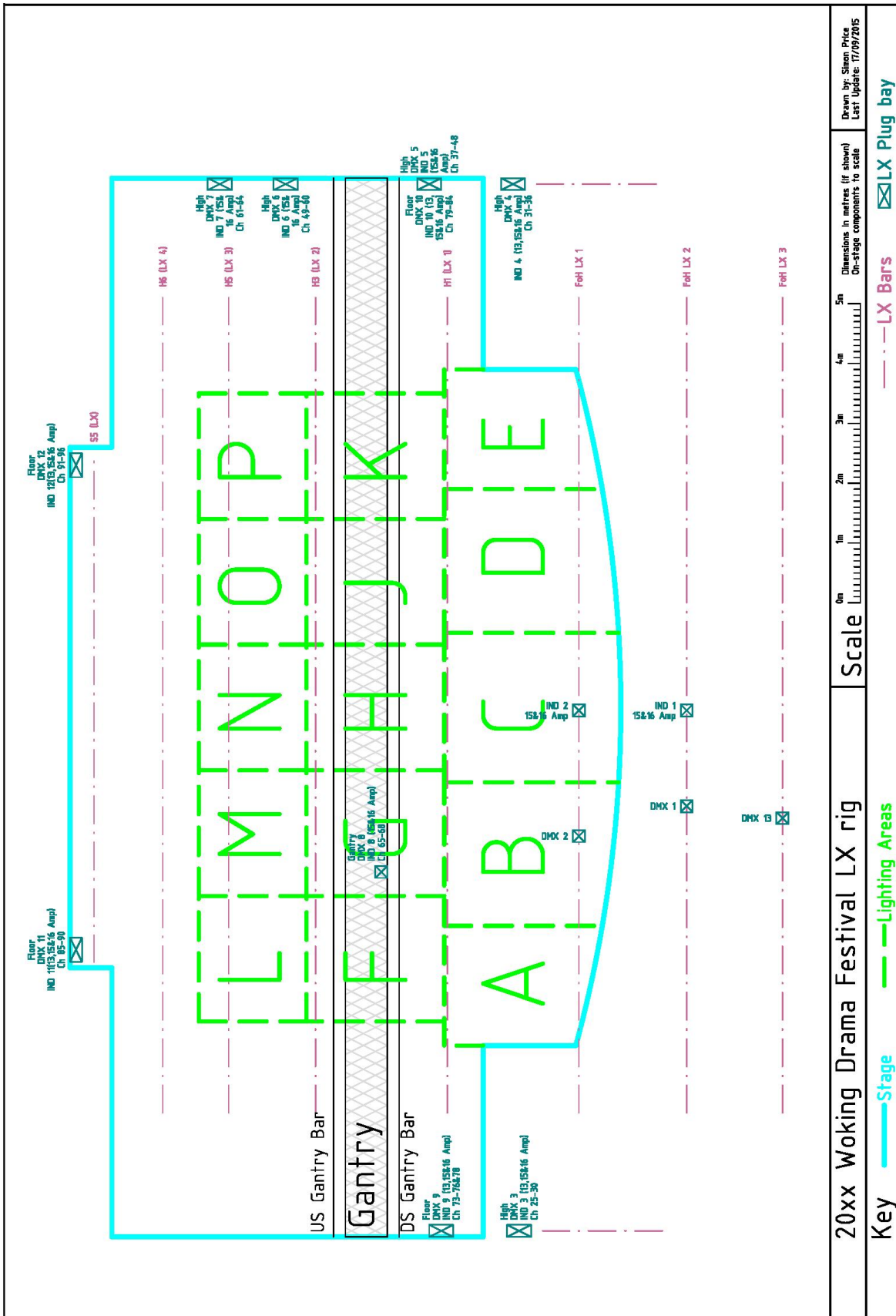
## **4 Festival lighting plans**

The following pages provide a number of plans of the theatre lighting rig and the standard areas covered by these. There are clearer plans available to download from the Woking Drama Festival website.

### 4.1 The standard lighting rig



## 4.2 Theatre lighting plug bays



### 4.3 All theatre hemsps showing tabs / curtains and measurements

