



STUDENT WORKSHEET 7

TIM LUTKIN ON BEING A SUPPORTIVE LEADER

“LIGHTING IS THIS LAYER THAT NEEDS TO BRING
OUT THE BEST IN EVERYBODY’S WORK.”

TIM LUTKIN

TIM LUTKIN IS AN OLIVIER AWARD-WINNING LIGHTING DESIGNER, WHO HAS WORKED ON MANY SHOWS IN LONDON’S WEST END AND THROUGHOUT THE UK. COMPANIES TIM HAS DESIGNED FOR INCLUDE THE NATIONAL THEATRE, THE ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY AND THE OLD VIC. WE SPOKE TO HIM ABOUT HIS ROLE AS THE LIGHTING DESIGNER ON **BACK TO THE FUTURE: THE MUSICAL**.

As the lighting designer on the show, Tim Lutkin has the overall responsibility for creating and delivering the design. However, a large part of Tim's role is also supervising a whole department of lighting specialists which includes:

- ✓ The associate lighting designer (associate LD) assists the lighting designer in creating and executing the lighting design. This might include assisting the lighting designer in creating the lighting plot and sketches.
- ✓ The assistant lighting designer (assistant LD) assists both the lighting designer and the associate lighting designer. The main difference between the lighting associate and the assistant is that the associate is generally authorized to speak on behalf of the LD and can make creative and design decisions when needed, whereas the assistant is not.
- ✓ Lighting supervisors, whose responsibility it is to look after the lighting night after night, when the show is up and running.

We asked Tim what this management role involves, now the show is open. He said:

"I go and see the show every few weeks... Maybe once a month basically, to check it looks good. Usually a surprise visit, or I'll tell them an hour before.

"I'd say that my role very much becomes a maintenance role, visually maintaining the show. But there's another side to it, which I do believe is really important."

"And it's important for anybody in any job, and it's important for students to understand when they go into lighting design, which is to be a supportive leader. And Monday I was in there with our two lighting supervisors who look after the show... Whose specific job is only to look after the lighting on the show.

"And I do feel that it's partly my role to support them. Both with anything they might need practically, but also to go in there and support them and tell them what they're doing right. And actually enjoy being there with them, and make them feel that we're part of a team. Because a very old-fashioned way of working, and some of the older designers still do this, is they operate on a fear basis and that's not the way of the world today. So I do believe that it's my duty, and my role as the lighting designer now, to not only maintain the visual look of the show, but to support those people. Even just to go in there, and show a bit of interest, and tell them where it's going right. And when you do that as a person, everybody's happier."

"You actually can get down to solving problems easier because there's less conflict in that world."

If you want to read more about the Tim Lutkin's lighting designs in the show, look at **Student Worksheet 15** in **Section 2: Screen to Stage**.