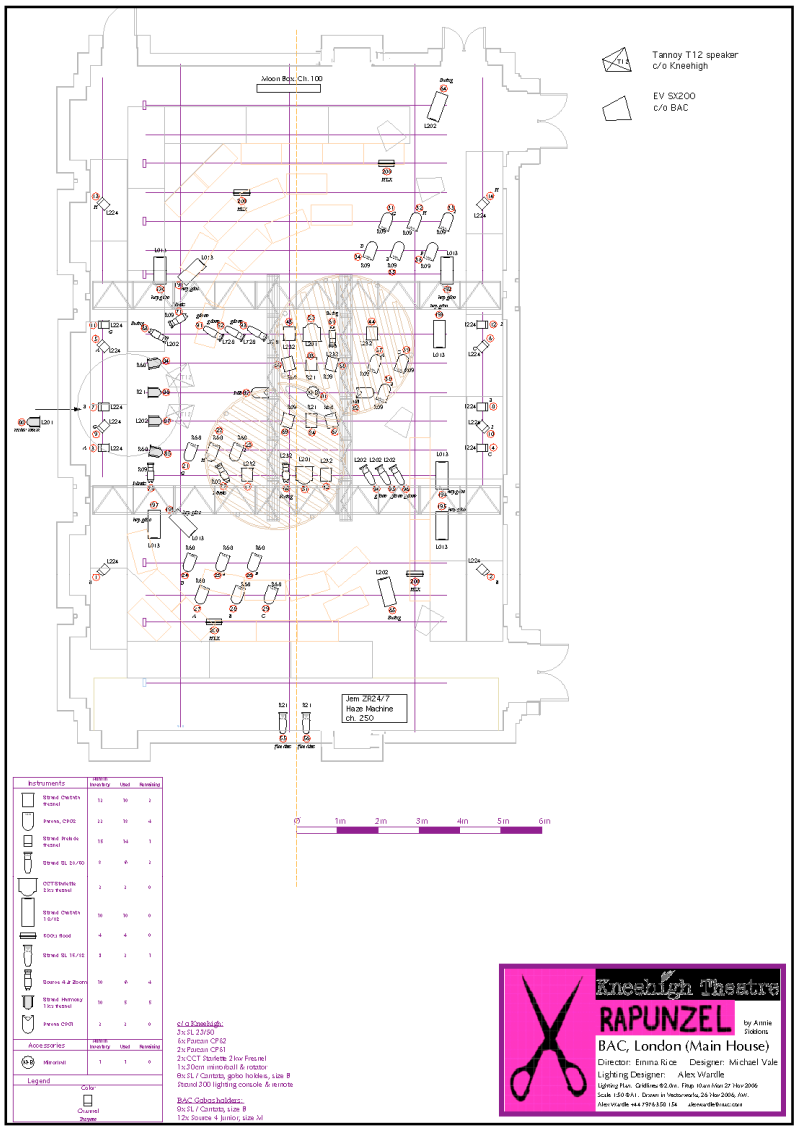
VectorWorks Spotlight Case Study: Rapunzel
Alex Wardle - Lighting Designer

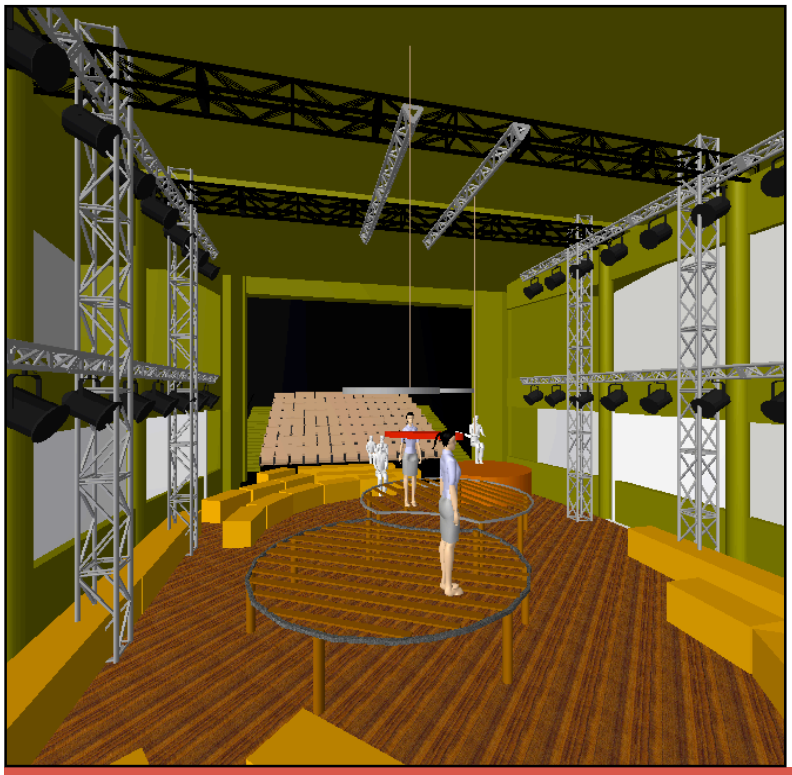
Even a small scale theatre production can require a number of accurate drawings. My last lighting design was "Rapunzel" for Kneehigh Theatre and Battersea Arts Centre. The production was staged in the round at BAC: being able to draw the space in 3D was essential; being able to do it quickly was also essential as the fee was not large.

The most time-consuming part of the process was reproducing Michael Vale's set, as I only had a paper version to work from. The resulting 3D model showed me how I could get away with using low-level sidelight without blinding the audience. Many people remarked on what a difficult space it was to light, and there would have been much more trial and error during the short production week if I had not drawn the Spotlight model.

Now that the 3D model exists, it has been invaluable for planning future tours for the production: the New Victory Theatre in New York have plans in VectorWorks, so I was able to drop the model straight ontop. There are also plans to play the Theatre Royal at Bristol Old Vic, but with the set in the auditorium rather than on the stage. The plans I had for this were a paper survey from 1941! Within a short time I was able to make a rough 3D model of the auditorium and build truss sections to show the production manager how we would need to suspend the flown pieces of scenery and build lighting positions. The temporary seating rake on the stage was quick to draw using the "create seating layout" tool. This is sufficiently clear to show to the local authority's fire officer, to obtain permission to stage the show and decide on audience capacity.

Photo: Steve Tanner





Alex Wardle
Description: Lighting Designer
www.alexwardle.co.uk
www.kneehigh.co.uk
www.ald.org.uk/AlexWardle