

## LAUNCH OF THE BACKSTAGE ACADEMY

The Backstage Academy is the new revolutionary education facility dedicated to the behind the scenes support to the entertainment industry. The Backstage Academy is about equipping the entertainments industry with the trained staff it needs – *by 2020 the sector will need 30,000 new technical staff.*

The Academy will be innovative and sustainable, and many of the initiatives will be employer led. Based in South Kirkby, and with additional training and workshop space being sought in the Wakefield and Doncaster areas, the Academy aims (from September 2009) to deliver education, outreach and regeneration via:

- [An innovative foundation degree](#) that can be studied online, part time or full time over a 24 week period. This will provide a unique path for +18 yrs, those seeking skills updating or those who find themselves seeking a new direction for employment
- [A range of online learning initiatives and short courses](#) as part of new learning, skills updating or career & professional development
- [Performing arts facilities](#) for rehearsal, training and performance in areas that urgently need a focal point for those people not in education, employment or training
- [Lifelong Learning](#) through a range of unique partnerships with the Children's University, Scout Association and the Prince's Trust (Amongst others)
- [Regeneration](#) - Backstage Academy will acquire 2,500m<sup>2</sup> of warehouse space in South Kirkby, Wakefield. This will then be converted to training and rehearsal space, providing a range of exciting and cutting edge facilities to the local community.

The Academy will also deliver a town centre live music venue in Wakefield. This will be a unique "shop window" for students work, in addition to providing a stage for new and emerging talent.

### Benefits

- A range of training and educational opportunities for all ages
- Facilities for the local community and the region as a whole
- Platform for industry to access student learning programmes
- Exchange of information, knowledge and skills between students, industry, the community and teachers
- Helping to maintain & develop the global reputation of British skills within the entertainment and live events sectors
- Developing life skills that enhance a person's chance of long term employability

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### Editors notes:

Related links: [www.backstage-academy.co.uk](http://www.backstage-academy.co.uk)

For further information, please contact Laurie Giraudeau, [laurie.giraudeau@litestructures.co.uk](mailto:laurie.giraudeau@litestructures.co.uk)  
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## Background

Tracing its history back as far as December 2007, the Academy concept emerged from a meeting between Adrian Brooks (Managing Director of Litestructures(GB)Ltd), Robin Watkinson and Kelly Aitken (both from the University of Leeds). Having joined forces to commission the University's brand new £5 million theatre complex, it became apparent that existing training programmes were leaving many students ill equipped to undertake a career in the live events sector.

It was decided that, with the backing of Litestructures, Robin and Kelly would develop a new range of training and personal development opportunities for a range of students – young and old alike. Central to these educational initiatives would also be unique collaboration with industry, venues, training providers the local community.

Adrian Brooks, Managing Director of Litestructures(GB)Ltd, the Academy's main partner, comments, "We are proud to be part of the Backstage Academy project—with our partners, we are committed to see this happen. Just as the music industry is always looking to nurture new talent for the future, so too must the backstage sector look to investing in the next generation - those who will build the stages of tomorrow. Like many in our industry we realise that backstage skills are scarce and set to get scarcer as many of our most talented designers, engineers and technicians are nearing retirement. We all need to invest for the future and that is what we are going to do through the Academy"

The idea has gone down well with many in the music industry. Bob Miller, Music Producer at Running Media/EMI, said, "Backstage Academy is ideally placed to deliver an exciting educational approach to the entertainment industry. The skills and insight that are to be delivered are in huge demand. The industry in its attempt to survive has exploded into a cycle of live shows and festivals, throughout the world. However this huge growth has exceeded its skill base."

The Backstage Academy's website is now LIVE ([www.backstage-academy.co.uk](http://www.backstage-academy.co.uk)) and its online content will be launched during PLASA 2009. The building completion will be in September 2009.

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The Backstage Academy has also been developed in Germany where Litestructures Germany has launched its own version of the project. The concept is more a one day seminar featuring high profile speakers/lecturers in the specialist field, listed below:

- Exhibition Stand technology / Lighting
- Technology & Law
- Stage Roof in Practice
- Marketing
- Finance

The first seminar is in May 2009. Details on [www.backstage-academy.de](http://www.backstage-academy.de)

[www.backstage-academy.co.uk](http://www.backstage-academy.co.uk)

[www.litestructures.co.uk](http://www.litestructures.co.uk)

[www.backstage-academy.de](http://www.backstage-academy.de)

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