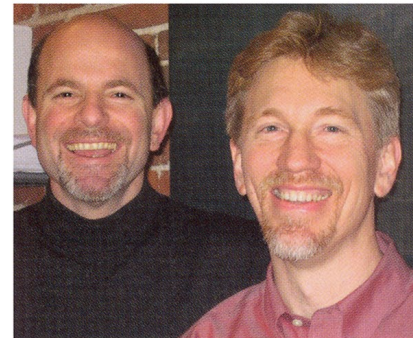


Steven Rosen and Ted Mather



In March, it was announced that “friendly rivals” Steven Rosen, of the design firm Available Light, and Ted Mather, of Ted Mather Lighting Design, would be joining forces as partners, with offices in Boston and New York, of a new, improved Available Light. LSA spoke to Rosen and Mather about the change, and what the future holds for the new company.

Lighting&Sound America: What was the impetus for you two to combine forces?

Ted Mather: During AAM [American Association of Museums] last year we hung out a bit together, and, upon enjoying each others company, thought it might be more fun to be partners than competitors. Once we started talking about it, we realized it made a great deal of sense to join together and share our experiences. We each have done a broad range of projects, which complimented each other very nicely. Together we have a really strong portfolio.

Steven Rosen: Although we already had a notable position in the industry, especially in the museum-exhibition field, we had been having a hard time cracking the New York City design firm door. So partnering up with Ted was a wonderful way to begin a new relationship and gain more direct access to the New York market.

LSA: How have your respective staffs adjusted to the change?

TM: So far, it has been seamless in functionality. All we’ve done in New York is change our e-mail addresses. The best part has been sharing our experiences in how we do things, and problem-solving. It’s really great to have a deep talent pool to draw from. As far as the clients are concerned, there has been no change in how we work with them, other than having more services to offer.

SR: I think our respective teams are enjoying the new, albeit remote, camaraderie. I think the change and broadening of all of our horizons will only feed our design skills.

LSA: What can your clients expect with the new company?

TM: A broader range of experience, multiple locations to make meetings easier (especially New York clients who have worked with the

Boston office). It means we can better serve our clients by designing an entire installation (i.e. an exhibit, gift shop, lobby, exterior, etc.), so the client does not have to hire two lighting designers for one project.

SR: And let’s not forget two for the price of one. My clients get Ted’s insights as well as my own. Ted’s clients get—well they get Matt Zerkowitz, Derek Barnwell, and Donald Christensen’s insights! I try to stay out of the way.

LSA: What are some of the projects you’re working on now?

TM: The Walgreens flagship store at One Times Square—where the ball is dropped every year. This is not your typical Walgreens! Strong theatrical elements, with strict client requirements for retail lighting. Also, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Annex in New York. There are several others that we are currently in talks with at the moment.

SR: We were just hired to provide schematic lighting design services to the architect developing a \$100-million renovation to the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. The capability of Available Light to service architects and exhibit designers makes us a force in the museum lighting design sector.

LSA: Will you continue to pursue theatre and performing arts design work?

TM: Yes, it keeps everyone fresh and challenged. Theatre technology and design tends to develop more rapidly than architectural technology, so, by staying involved in the theatre, we keep in touch with the latest developments. It also is a good reminder that we are intimately involved with the human experience. In the theatre, footcandles and energy codes mean very little, but how we as human beings relate to each other is key.

SR: Although my theatre design work has dwindled, I still try to do a couple of shows a year. It is always good to return to one’s roots now and again.

LSA: Can you talk a little about how Available Light is working to bring a green consciousness to design?

TM: This is where we think we can be leaders in our industry. Although the type of work we do often involves a more “theatrical” approach, we are always considering all the owner’s concerns, from energy usage to lamp maintenance. We know that in the end, it must look fabulous in order to be considered successful, so we are always on the lookout for new technologies that can best fulfill all the requirements of the project. An installation is never successful only because it consumes a certain watt-per-foot ratio, but whether or not the people inhabiting the space enjoy it, feel good, want to come back, as well as being serviceable, efficient, and having less environmental impact in its entire life cycle.

SR: By its very nature, the style of our work—what our clients come to us for—requires energy. Far more energy than is needed to light an office space or a classroom. But, as all things are relative, we are challenging ourselves, our manufacturers, and our clients to employ technologies that allow us to do what we do, yet consume far less of our precious resources. Whether it be motion sensors that reduce power consumption when no one is looking, replacing incandescent sources with ceramic metal halide and fluorescent, or exploring new applications within the wild new world of LEDs, we are constantly questioning the value of each choice we make. Meanwhile, I follow my daughters around turning off the lights behind them. ☺