



last July, I walked upon the pier"). It is a tickling-stick in CUE's cap, however, to have discovered some lines, probably written *before* the time of Coleridge, that suggest some historic sympathy with the lighting and sound people engaged, through the years, to keep the pierrots pirouetting. They go like this:-

*On Wigan Pier did Shobiz Khan
A stately pleasure-drome decree:
Where Alf, the Chief Technician, ran
Through routines meaningless to man
Down by an oily sea.*

*So twice ten feet of upstage ground
With lighting-towers were girdled round:
And there were battens thick with floating
spots
Where crackled many a carbide-burning lamp;
And here was wiring ancient as old plots
To carry every flying watt and amp . . .*

*The shadows of Alf's dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the dock;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the Bingo and the Rock.
. . . It was a miracle of rare device
To see Isolde done in drag—on ice!*

Rambling along the Rambla

Barcelona is said to have 25 theatres. By expensive taxi it is possible to locate about six, most of which, despite their impressive facades and prestigious names, turn out in fact to be *salas de espectaculos* or, as we might call them, Talk of the Towns. Of the legit theatres the *Barcelona* itself is cheerfully staging a romp attributed to Frederick Soler ("*farsa erotica-escatalogica*" the publicity says, and we hope we don't know what it means), the *Apolo* is doing something called "*Seductora*" ("*extraordinario montaje coreografico*"), and the Lyceum, Barcelona's Opera House, is very firmly closed: despite its stake in the marvellous indigenous talents of Placido Domingo and Monserrat Caballe, and lacking any sort of subsidy, it only manages to open about four months of the year.

The work Christopher Baldwin (commuting from Builth Wells) has been doing, and which he writes about on page 18, is for the brothers Ramon and Antonio Riba, whose interests as impresarios and artistic directors extend from Barcelona and Madrid all the way to Mexico (where they are staging "*The Deluge*") and occasionally to London. Their latest venture has been the inauguration of the glamorous "*Galas*" in

Salou (down the coast by Tarragona), which is designed to replace, as a tourist attraction, their ill-fated *Scala-Barcelona* which burned down as the result of what the newspaper *Vanguardia* calls "*un entado terroriste*".

If, however, Barcelona is not really a city of theatres in the London or New York sense it glories in the technical and visual exploits of perhaps the most theatrical architect ever known, Antonio Gaudi, whose pieces of "scenery in stone" rear up all over, as palaces, houses, even shops. His astonishing Temple of the Holy Family, started way back in 1882, is now coming along fast, entirely according to the plans he left—even for details like the Paschal candle-holders. And no set-designer we ever heard of has equalled the inventive exuberance of his pavilions and artifacts and follies in, say, Barcelona's *Parque de Guell*.

Light on their feet

While lighting designers are justly singled out for mention, it is all too easy to overlook the unsung backstage technicians who rig and operate the lighting.

We spoke to Adrian Dightam, chief lighting engineer with the London Contemporary Dance Theatre, who was taking a breather after LCDT'S splendid three-week season at Sadler's Wells in the summer.

He was full of praise for the Dance Theatre, which he considers is unique in the care it takes in lighting. I've been with LCDT for five years now, he says, and for lighting techniques this is a very exciting company to work with.

The LCDT has been invited to do six weeks at the London Coliseum next year. Plans are already being laid for a new lighting rig which, Dightam says, should be quite revolutionary. John B. Read, who has worked for LCDT ever since it was formed 10 years ago, will be designing for the Coliseum.

Dightam admires the way John B. Read is always striving for new ideas, without resorting to any sort of gimmickry.

He thinks Read's design for the LCDT'S "*Masque of Separation*", which included a stunning passage in which the stage is filled with dark red and pierced with shafts of gold from the wings is one of his best.

What Dightam likes about the whole company is that everybody is very close, with a family atmosphere about it. That

Classified Advertisers

Due to lack of space we were unable to include classified advertisements in this issue and we apologise to all those advertisers we have had to disappoint. We shall however have a classified section in all future issues which as well as the normal trade classifications will include "WANTED" and "FOR SALE" Sections. The cost is 30p per word or £6.50 per column centimetre for classified display. Rate cards giving full details are available.

goes for the dancers too, who are very aware of the lighting—very aware of where they should be at the right time in the dance.

In October LCDT will strike new territory at the Roundhouse. For Dightam working in the round for the first time this will pose some challenging lighting problems. Meanwhile he describes on another page some of the rigs and the day to day workings in lighting London Contemporary Dance.

Mystery in the air

Though he is probably too modest to admit it, lighting designer James Laws performed a small and extremely appropriate miracle in lighting a cycle of open air mystery plays in a field in Hampshire last month.

His illumination of the divine mystery was executed with the aid of four 30 foot lighting towers with two operators on each and the entire system linked to a transformer on a pole. The electricity board originally asked £1,000 for the supply, but in an act of unusual generosity, allowed themselves to be talked down to £800.

A mystery play was a medieval religious entertainment produced by tradesmen's guilds and based on Bible stories or the lives of the saints. It was the practice in large towns for each guild to contribute one play to the cycle, the best-known being the York, Coventry and Towneley cycles. Performances, which lasted from sunrise to sunset, were held in the open air on large four-wheeled carts known as pageants.

The actors were paid, but they were also subject to fines if they didn't learn their parts properly. The guilds had a very strict code of discipline. Men dressed as devils or "tormentors" in black buckram with nails and dice on them stood at the left hand side of the mobile stage (Hell was always on the left and Heaven on the right) concealing the crouching prompters. Today's tormentors are made of cardboard or wood of course, but the name has stuck.

In those days the mystery cycles included anything from 20-50 plays and were at the height of their popularity in England and Europe from about 1300-1450.

Last month's latter-day Jesus Christ Superstar production was a 10-day epic. The organisers chose the Lincoln Mystery Cycle consisting of 20 plays. James Laws said that the earliest references to it go back to 1471. Director Kay Northwood used a translation from old English by Martial Rose. Designer Clare Jeffrey was in charge of the three-level stage.

The setting was Elvetham Park, and the mysteries were performed without the aid of microphones by about 100 amateur actors.

The Lord of the Manor, Sir Richard Calthorpe, provided the site. And the ambitious project was backed by 10 others who put up £1,000 each. Now if that's not an act of faith, we don't know what is.

James Laws will be writing on how he lit the production in the next issue of CUE.

Autolycus column contributed by Mike Walker and Anthony Pugh.