

race riots, and student protest rise to a crescendo. Some of the slides on the up-stage screen are polarised, and using filters moving patterns are created.

But what about the people? Given all the slides and films, lighting the performers, with sufficient intensity and variation is obviously difficult. Follow spots could not be used, because of the large amount of time the front gauze was in. 'Spill' and 'bouce', in what is virtually a corridor between the two screens, also had to be avoided. Jules Fisher's answer was to use largely side and back lighting. This also helped with the 'lookalike' illusion, if their faces weren't too brilliantly lit! It is really dance lighting. Using Silhouette 15's, 25's and 30's, one lamp lights the face, while another provides overall colour for the body. The light hits the musicians and then disappears into the wings. There is a boom upstage each side lighting the drums, and downstage each side lighting the mike positions. The lamps run about 3 ft to 8 ft from the floor. Each boom has a mixture of two warm colours, two cool colours, and a colour wheel with really deep tones. Additionally, there are tightly focused downlighters on each position, together with colour wash back lighting, and gobos on the white disc, which is carpeted to avoid bounce. There is a groundrow on the back screen, and footlights on the gauze. Fisher's use of colour is stunning. Taken from the Gelatran, Roscoe and Cinemoid ranges, it is always vibrant and always changing There

are 181 lighting states in 100 minutes!

The battery of lighting effects, almost matches the media in its comprehensiveness. From the scaffolding bridge on to the rear screen:

- 2 - Patt 252 Cloud Effects
- 2 - Spiral Projectors (A continuously revolving spiral with dissolving colour)
- 2 - Moving Pattern Projectors (Rather like two counter revolving black doilies)

On the stage:

- 2 - 30 rpm Colour Wheels (These almost give the effect of a chase) U.V.
- 1 - Strobe

From the Circle front on to the gauze:

- 1 - R.D.S. Projector (Generating moving faces)
- 1 - Moving Stars Projector
- 1 - Patt 252 Chromosphere (With the colours removed)

In the auditorium on to the audience:

- 6 - Rotating Beacons
- 8 - Strobes
- Blinder Battens

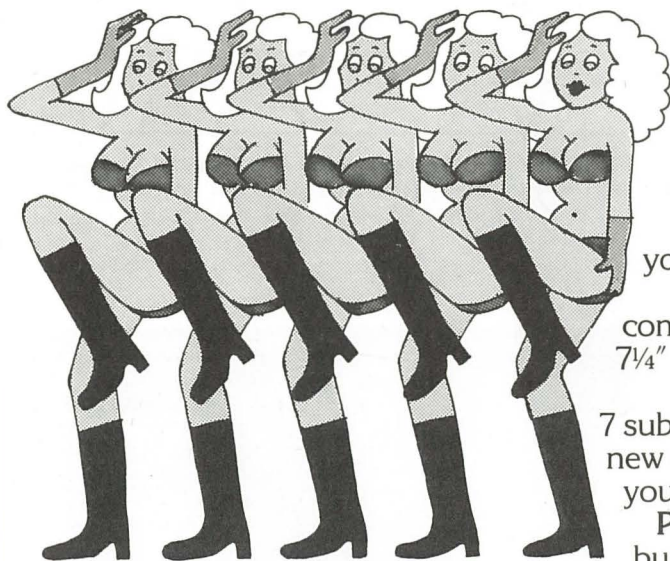
But what does it all look like? Immediately the spectre of Elvis looms. Comparisons may be 'odorous', but are inevitable, given that the two shows have almost followed each other, in the same theatre. Elvis was, to put it tactfully,

'inspired' by Beatlemania. However, since Elvis reached London first, it has obviously stolen some of the thunder, since the concept is no longer totally new. It is interesting that each show is more ambitious in a different direction. Beatlemania is necessarily more static, since the performers play instruments as well as sing. In Elvis it was possible to stage 'scenes' interpreting the numbers as incidents in Presley's life, making it more of a theatre piece. In Beatlemania, the musicians are more passive, and the emphasis is on the hardware, the technology. The visual 'attack' is certainly greater - there are twice the number of projectors that Elvis had. The aim is the overall impression, there is no conventional storyline.

As to the projectors themselves, I have to say that in my opinion, the Kodak SAV 2000's with 400watt 36volt lamps used in Elvis, gave a brighter and more even image. They could also be controlled by an electronic dissolve unit, rather than a douser. I don't think that I will ever persuade the creators of Beatlemania to agree with me though. See it and judge for yourself. Certainly, it is more complex than anything attempted in this country before.

Technical credits for the London production:

Production Co-ordinator: Robert V. Straus
Lighting Designer: Robbie Monk
Media Engineer: Mary McGregor



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