

# Autolycus

## The Cisco Kid?

Cisco, the big trade show for cinematic and stage equipment in Paris, has now erupted three times. It obviously fills a need or supplies an excuse, and everybody who is anybody, as they say, was there – even though CUE's representative, rather ostentatiously wearing his economy hair-shirt, approached it by the least probable route available, via Lydd Airport (Junkers 52's, mind the step).

The 1979 Cisco carried noisily and significantly on its back Discom, the European Discotheque Show, and we can only expect that, next time, they'll make space for Crisco and have show-business catering in the act too. Anyway, equipment and design companies from 15 countries went to Cisco and showed their wares, France weighing in with 105, West Germany with 28, Great Britain (well done that subsidy) with 24, Italy and the USA with 16 each, and the rest more or less nowhere. Which is a fair reflexion, we believe, of where the action is, and where the competition is, in technological terms, provided, of course, that *how* you put things on is more important than what you are putting on.

What emerges at Cisco are the really extraordinary facilities that can be summoned up to help you *process* an audience, if not actually to please it. And that, obviously, is where the money is and where the work is.

'Corporate Theatre', the business of theatricalising and spectacularising conventions, conferences, seminars, symposia, colloquia (they *all* used just to be called sales conferences, or, sometimes, propaganda) is something every lighting and sound designer and technician should be up in and in on. One American garment manufacturer, it was reported by James Moody of Sundance, now puts nearly the whole of his advertising budget not into TV commercials or print ads but into a \$2,000,000 musical, which tours department-stores, and runs for over an hour, to publicise the firm's brandnames. Most of the production budget, he judges cheerfully enough, goes into multi-media effects.

What the essentially captive audiences (you want to lose your job from not attending, maybe?) make of corporate theatre nobody is saying. On the one hand you've usually got marketing men acting on

the old aphorism 'If they laugh they remember', on the other you've got creative people taking refuge in their slogan 'If you've got nothing to say, sing it'. No, it isn't quite theatre. But it *is* technical theatre. And that's us.

## The alternative Festival

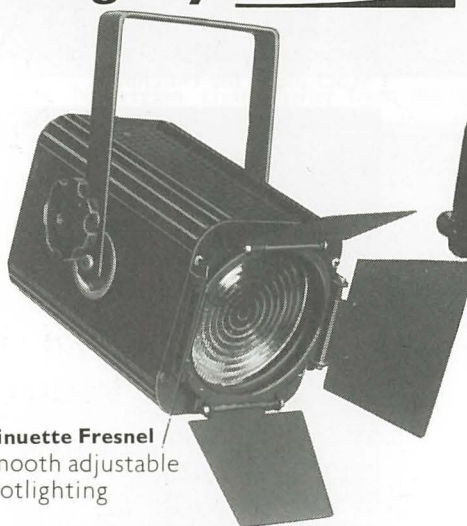
The London Students Drama Festival (LSDF is not an entirely happy abbreviation, we felt) is now rounding apace and will be brought to bed at the Collegiate Theatre in Gordon Street, W.C.1 between February 18th and March 1st. At the time CUE went to bed some 20 groups had entered productions. Meanwhile workshop sessions in many aspects of theatre have been proceeding under the tutelage of some very distinguished names. Max Stafford-Clark (lately of the Royal Court) is covering Direction. Voice is being dealt with by Cecily Berry, Mime by Desmond Jones. Lighting and Sound sessions are under the control of two RSC stalwarts, Nick Firth

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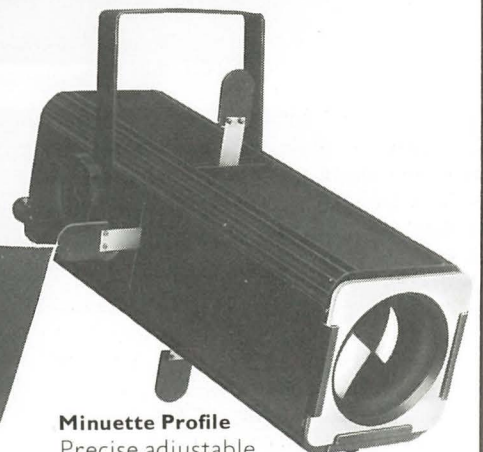
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