courtyard' theatre with seating for 200. This is better by 100, the company and CUE believes, than that in so many London locales one has felt a somehow too involved groundling in. As a bonus to their leasehold, the Tricycle Theatre Company also gets possession of enough space for proper dressing rooms, bars and a kitchen etc., and a spectacularly large rehearsal room-to-be, which will double as a venue for the childrens' activities Shirley Barrie specialises in.

As his drawing shows, Tim Foster has based his structure for the theatre proper on a type of contractor's scaffolding which can be bought off the shelf and will be put up by the Company itself. And this, of course, has kept costs splendidly down, the whole conversion coming out at no more (in London, in London!) than £130,000. So far the company has raised about £100,000 of this, the benevolent Borough of Brent weighing in with £50,000, £20,000 coming from the Arts Council of Great Britain's 'Housing the Arts' Fund, and two sums of roughly £10,000 coming from the GLC Arts Committee and the Gulbenkian Foundation. Tricycle has some £40,000 still to find (local businesses and institutions please note, 'though not splendid Guinness which has already been good for them').

All in all this parade of sordid figures shows at least what can still be done for how much and who is doing it. Still to come is the Tricycle Theatre's opening in September this year – probably with a new play by Michael Abbensetts. We suggest that you might need to start queueing for a 32 or 176 bus up to Kilburn in about early August.

## Lighting the Festival (1)

In our quest to spotlight the valiant but anonymous backstage technicians who do all the heavy and exacting work of rigging and lighting with none of the glory, we met Ray Purvis who is deputy chief electrician with the London Festival Ballet. Both Ray and the Festival are 30 years old. He hails from Newcastle and has been in the business for 15 years. With evident good humour he spoke of back-breaking tours constantly assembling and dismantling the company's vast number of lights. While on the road, the Festival will take anything up to 600 colours depending on its repertoire. 'Do you know we've got 27 shades of blue,' said Ray, still faintly amazed.

The roadshow does not travel light. Six tons of electrical equipment are crammed into a monster Artic truck 40 feet in length. And in 1978 it took an astonishing 27 tons of gear when visiting Australia with 'The Sleeping Beauty'.

All this equipment means one hell of a lot of work for Ray and the other four members of the lighting crew, including chief electrician David Mohr. 'When we're really busy I guarantee we'll miss two nights sleep per week,' said Ray with a live-hard play-hard note of pride. Not surprisingly, his constant companion is his sleeping bag.

Such dedication pays dividends of course. It meant, for example, that Ray and the Festival were among the first westerners to visit that most rarefied of countries; China. The Chinese hadn't seen a western ballet for 25 years and the 1979 visit attracted considerable prestige. Peking, Shanghai, names on a map in a once forbidden land suddenly became real and tangibly exotic places. Even the fabled Oriental inscrutability became flesh – 'They didn't applaud,' said Ray. 'At least, not in the conventional manner. It was just a few claps and then off. But I think they liked it.

'Another odd thing,' he continued enthusiastically, 'they have a habit of spitting everywhere. In fact while we were doing The Sanguine Fan in Shanghai, a guy in the third row gave such an almighty heave from the throat that the orchestra couldn't stop laughing. Titters started in the clarinet department and spread right round to the first violins. The Chinese must have been

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rather embarrassed because a women made an announcement in the interval asking the audience to refrain from spitting.'

Ray assured us that this quaint culture shock did not however detract from his enjoyment of the mysterious East.

The London Festival Ballet is in the course of celebrating its 30th anniversary and a new phase in its distinguished history under its recently-appointed artistic director John Field.

## Lighting the Festival (2)

The end of Gatwick Airport's main runway might seem an incongruous place to hold a son et lumière. But there nestles the village of Charlwood and its 900-year-old Norman Church of St. Nicholas. And the church was the focal point of the Charlwood Festival, medieval pageant held at the end of May in celebration of its longevity and as a means of raising money for its restoration.

Rector, Rev. David Clarke said the festival grew out of the Queen's Silver Jubilee celebrations. 'We had such a jolly time we decided to repeat it,' he said.

Unusually, the son et lumière was held inside the church because of fears that it might rain.

Local man Kevin Monk was in charge of the lighting; one follow spot, five soft beam spots and five floodlights which were used in conjunction with a projector.

While not a professional, Mr. Monk has devoted much of his spare time in the last five years to lighting the comedies and pantomimes performed by the local amateur drama group, the Charlwood Players. 'I got collared into it somehow and found I enjoyed it,' he said.

Built by the Normans in 1080 the Church of St. Nicholas was added to over the centuries until 1500 when work was completed. Its story, culled from a local history called 'The Freeman of Charlwood', was presented in documentary form together with sound effects, electronic music and excerpts from orchestral works by Brahms, Tippet, Handel and Vaughan Williams.

'We're also cheating a little,' said the rector, 'by filling in with two live acting parts – two characters in seventeenth-century costume.'

Some forty families in the village were preparing to welcome a planeload of Texans into their homes for the week-long festival. The son et lumière was only part of the attraction. The promise of medieval jousting had captured their imagination and no doubt their proverbial lust for the past.

Billed as the biggest tournament since jousting was abolished in the sixteenth century, ten knights of Knebworth, replete with chain mail and tabard, were preparing to demonstrate their horsemanship and skill in the lists by tilting at each other with lances, hacking at each other with axes and twohanded swords and finally battering each other senseless with ball and chain.

Any unchivalrous action by the brave knights (stuntmen in real life) would be met with punishment in the stocks or, worse still, being tied up in a sack and dragged around the arena by one of the horses.

Well, nice work if you can get it, we suppose.